A MAN'S THOUGHTS

'HOMO sum; humani nihil à me alienum puto.'—*Terence.*

'Believe with Lord Monboddo that man sprang from an ape, or with yon' learned divine that he descends from the angels, he is still—A MAN.'—*Mackenzie*, 1781.

'If a company keeps a steam fire engine, the firemen need not be straining themselves all day to squirt over the top of the flagstaff. Let them wash some of their lower storey windows a little.'—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

A

MAN'S THOUGHTS

BY

J. HAIN FRISWELL

AUTHOR OF 'THE GENTLE LIFE'

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DEDICATED

TO THE

REV. CHARLES KINGSLEY, M.A.

CANON OF CHESTER

&c. &c. &c.

BY ONE WHO IS PROUD TO BE NUMBERED

AMONGST A GOOD MAN'S FRIENDS

ADVERTISEMENT.

A PORTION of this book has appeared in the 'Leader,' the 'London Review,' or in other periodicals. The title under which these Essays now appear has been chosen more on account of its unobtrusive and negative character than for any other reason. If an author has no other recommendation, he may at least claim to be A MAN.

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Errata.

Page 40, *for* is it not, *read* it is not.
,, 41, ,, sticking, ,, striking.
,, 92, ,, pronounced ,, pronounces.

For other and no doubt far graver errors the Author's severe and long illness, during the passage of this book through the press, must plead some excuse.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION--EGOTISM.

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The Central Vowèl and First Numeral—Egotism—Its Universality—Belief in Self—Egotism of Great Men—Birth—Punishment of Self-Pride—Difficulty in believing that we are Obnoxious or Hateful—Self-Examination.

I BEGIN my book with it; it is the first letter and the first word, and, with some unhappy men, the only thought through life.

But in reading, it changes its person, and transfers itself from me to you.

I talk about it, though yet upon the threshold of this book, because a wise friend objected to the title that 'A Man's Thoughts' was somewhat egotistical. Why so it is doubtful; since an author, small though he may be, is at least a man, and as for egotism he shows no more—or needs to show no more—in the projection of his thoughts upon the public than a painter, an actor, or a preacher. These, too, seek to instruct, or influence, or amuse the

world; some few even dream of reforming it, by throwing their thoughts into the seething mass of opinion—'casting their bread upon the waters,' to use a misapplied and sacred symbol, and hoping that after many days it may return to them.

An author may, perhaps, in these days, be excused for hoping in that way. His egotism is the least selfish, since his returns, in a worldly point of view, are nearly the least of all. And indeed my friend's suggestion turned, in my particular case, my intention 'the seamy side without,' for, by the title of this book, I desired to get as far away from personal vanity and conceit as one well could. And after all it is not much to claim to be a Man; at any rate that depends upon the estimate one places upon the privilege of being the far-off-descended creature modern naturalists make him out to be. My intention, then, was merely to give a name to certain thoughts and opinions here put forward. That I have not placed upon my own any peculiar value will be seen from the trouble I have taken to strengthen every proposition by citations from better writers and from nobler minds. If in this my purpose is mistaken for pedantry I shall be grieved but not surprised.

We cannot escape this egotism; it follows us through life; the prayer of the humble Publican is as close to it as that of the proud Pharisee; we drive self away with earnest entreaties and humble prayers, with good reso-

lutions and manly endeavour, but it fits too closely to us. It is born with us, it exists with us—and some, vainly let us hope, say that it does not die with us but will rise again.

What we call egotism, the French, who have formed their noun somewhat more closely than we, term *égoïsme*; and speaking of an adept in this passion, of which their nation furnishes brilliant examples, say, '*dont je connaissais l'égoïsme renforcé*—of whose *thorough selfishness* I was aware.' You see hereby that a whole nation places to the account of egotism a passionate love and admiration of self. It may not be always selfishness; it has even been reduced to a philosophical opinion. 'Descartes,' says Reid, in his 'Essays on the Human Mind, was uncertain of everything but his own existence, and the existence and operations and ideas of his own mind. Some of his disciples remained, it is said, at this stage of his system, and got the name of egoists.'

Another author tells us that the gentlemen of Port Royal banished from their method of speaking any reference to the first person, and called anyone who spoke that way an egotist. Editors are obliged to follow this rule, and to banish the eternal reference to their own opinions; for egotism, if pleasing to oneself, is always distasteful to others. The leader-writers of the newspapers therefore say 'we,' instead of 'I;' and certainly that method of speaking to the public seems to be best

suited to the English and Americans, two nations of egotists. *We* are of opinion that the Ministry has signally failed, is more condemnatory and weighty than the simple *I*, because it is less egotistic. One way of depriving newspapers of their weight and force would be to make the writers drop the anonymous and sign their names. Actually an opinion is an opinion, and worth what it is worth, whether it be of A or of B. Really the opinion of the same writer in the 'Daily Universe' will cause more stir than the same theory put forward in the 'Morning World;' for office clings to a man and adorns him. You combat the unfledged opinions of Brown at your dinner-table, and yet his crude opinion clothed in weighty words will 'damn' a delicate author. When Brown is thoroughly known, and the blind taken away from the window, his naked egotism is seen, and the world regards him not.

It was not without reason that the Oracles inhabited the darkest recesses of the Temple, and that in the olden Mythology the voice issued from the fissures of the rock or from behind the veil.

A certain amount of egotism, that is, belief in self, is natural to all men. It has been said that every man thinks he can poke the fire better than any other man. In shooting, fishing, novel-writing, riding, many men believe they can surpass others; and although women, from their greater subjection to society, are less offensive in their egotism, it is said they are as bad. We must do

them this justice, that they conceal it better; and we cannot doubt that they must be often punished by hearing men talk of nothing but themselves: how *I* am going to plough the ten-acre lot and sow it with red wheat; and *I* shall go shooting, and *I* shall have my bay mare clipped, together with a thousand instances of *my* cigars, *my* port, *my* claret, *my* tandem, *my* books, and *my* tailor, or the fellow who 'built' *my* hunting coat. People of fair position and education talk like this; of course they will indignantly deny it when put thus plainly; but let anyone ask the ladies. Let them ask what barristers talk about, what university men, club men, authors or artists talk about. It is little else but an experience of self; 'each thinks his little set mankind.' Everybody believes in his own circle, his friends, his native village, his school, his college; and the centre of that circle is self.

It is so hard to go out of the centre; we play at puss in the corner with ourselves, and keep to the corner as long as we can; and some people, sublime egotists, are virtuous because it is comfortable, and religious because thereby they please the world; and by pleasing the world they of course please themselves.

Happily this self-opinion is not an unmixed evil. It may have caused half the troubles in the world; but it has certainly caused half the triumphs and more than half the comforts and inventions. Unless Nelson had believed in himself, we should not have been where we are now. Unless Brindley had believed in his one im-

portant scheme, and had thought that 'God Almighty made rivers to feed navigable canals,' we should not have had the water-transit; and unless Watt and others had believed in their own merits and inventions, our land-transit would now have been pretty much as it was a century ago. What belief in self must not Doctor Livingstone, Captains Grant and Burton, Sir Samuel Baker, and other travellers have, who go alone into a continent of savages—alone, and to conquer all difficulties, discover and open up new lands? We can see this egotism plainly enough in Bruce, the great Abyssinian traveller: he was perpetually full of himself and what he had done. We may reasonably suppose it in the others—no doubt 'toned down' by courtesy, religion, or philosophy; but there it is. How thoroughly every satirist must have it! Let us look at Juvenal condemning all Rome; Horace satirising all the weaker poets; Persius abusing Bavius and the whole Roman world, nay, mankind—

> When I look round on Man, and find how vain
> His passions—

as if he were not a man himself! Can there be anything more pitiable than the picture which Pope gives of himself as persecuted by everybody, followed by poets who begged his help—

> No place is sacred; not the church is free:
> E'en Sunday shines no Sabbath Day to me.
> Then from the Mint walks forth the man of rhyme,
> Happy to catch *me*—just at dinner-time:

—and the measure he dealt out to obscure scribblers in the *Dunciad?* How could he write those lines in the *Universal Prayer*—'that mercy I to others show, that mercy show to me,' when half his life had been spent in mercilessly cutting and wounding others?

All painters have much self-love: their imagination is great, their reflection little; their success easily perceived, and brilliant. All actors are of course immense egotists. How else could they strut in kingly parts, and believe themselves fit representatives of *Hamlet*, *Cæsar*, *Brutus*, and *King Cambyses*? As the vanity of Sir Godfrey Kneller, in an anecdote, throws a light upon his class, so does one of Cooke, the actor, illuminate his own. Kneller said to a sitter, 'Flatter me, my dear sir; I paint better when you flatter me;' and Pope, who says he never before saw such vanity, tells us that when Sir Godfrey lay dying, he spent his time contemplating his own monument, and had a dream, in which he saw St. Luke in Heaven, who welcomed him there, crying, 'Are you the famous Sir Godfrey Kneller from England?' and then embraced him, and paid him 'many pretty compliments,' said Sir Godfrey, '*on the art we both had followed while in this world.*' Can egotism go further? It would seem impossible; yet that exclamation of Farinelli's the musician, exceeds it. 'What a divine air!' said an admirer to him, when he ceased playing. 'Yes,' said the Italian, as he laid down his violin, 'one God, one

Farinelli!' After this, Cooke's vanity is small and dwarfed. He and a great actor had been arranging a season together, and had divided the even or equal parts, such as *Brutus* and *Cassius;* when it came, however, to 'Richard III.,' Cooke broke off the engagement by crying, 'What! I, George Frederick Cooke, play Richmond to your Richard! I'll——' We need not finish the sentence.

Doubtless this intense egotism, as it is found with all artists, is necessary to the artistic nature. Without it they would sink in the midst of their disappointments and trials. Nor can a poet or an author attempt to teach the world without a full belief in that which he teaches, and in himself as a teacher. What is so distasteful to us all, is the egotism of a man who has really done nothing in the world, who is as mean in his appearance as he is mediocre in his talents, and who will yet presume upon his twopenny position to dictate to others; nay will often prove not only an enemy to merit, but an obstructive to all true teaching and improvement. The vainest of these men have generally the least to recommend them; and because they own nothing, are proud of that nothing. They doat upon themselves, and pet themselves, and treat themselves in the inverse ratio of their merits, with an intense self-respect; whereas it is ordinarily found that the really meritorious man is distinguished by a retiring modesty.

If one of these men happens to be born of a house noble, or supposed to be noble, he will treat men of merit, who are simply but later parallels of his good ancestors, with contempt as new men. If, on the contrary, he is a new man himself, he will take pride in his riches, and 'shove aside the worthy bidden guest.' These men, like those who beat the walls in madhouses, are a sufficient punishment to themselves; but what we want is a society that can correct them. Our education is not finished when we leave school, and our whippings should not end there. For this end satire has been resorted to; but in the public press and society in general there is a great want of that wholesome ingredient. Men snigger at but they do not scorn a foolish rich man now-a-days; they sneer at him behind his back and dine with him next day; whereas, in the days of Elizabeth, when the drama was a power, they showed him up on the stage, hat, feather, trunk hose, and sword, and pointed the moral thus :—

> How purblind is the world that such a monster,
> In a few dirty acres swaddled, should
> Be mounted in opinion's empty scale,
> Above the reach of virtues which adorn
> Souls that make worth their centre, and to that
> Draw all their lines of action!

We don't want now-a-days a freedom like that of the Greek comedians; but we do want a pungent and pure satire to

laugh at folly, and to extinguish and cover with ridicule successful vice.

Egotism is of course, when it is a vice, accompanied with its peculiar punishment. The man who is a vulgar egotist, and obtrudes his misfortunes or experiences on others, instead of wisely bearing them himself silently and strongly, relieves his sorrows by giving tongue to them, but is generally set down as a bore. 'It is a hard and nice subject for a man to speak of himself: it grates his own heart to say anything of disparagement, and the listener's ears to hear anything in praise from him.' This is Cowley's dictum, and a very true one. We are all so selfish, that we suspect self-praise, and think it to be no recommendation. Moreover, an egotist of this sort will often relate the most absurd stories of himself rather than be silent. Hence he blunders on, filling his hearers with disgust, and himself reaping the mere tickling pleasure of hearing his own feats chronicled by his own tongue. People who are ill, and who have suffered misfortune, are subject to this complaint. Poor women who gossip in the street can always be overheard saying something about themselves or their own misfortunes. 'So I goes to Mrs. Jenkins merely to beg the loan of a few coals, and——'; and then the story begins, the listener only awaiting her turn to pour her little chronicle of self into her neighbour's ears. They are all like two authors, who,

not being rivals of each other, can afford to bepraise each other's works.

The Scotch have a proverb, 'you scratch me, and I'll tickle thee;' and so two or three egotists, by a natural adhesion, seem to stick to one another, as certain cunning old horses and cows will stand head and tail under a tree to flap away the flies.

This passion of the mind takes some very curious forms, and when indulged in, leads to madness, certainly often to guilt. Can calm and quiet people, who know how empty fame is, understand those who will commit a crime to be talked about, or who will peril their lives in a dangerous performance, because it pleases their egotism that others should stare at them? Can we comprehend the twisted brain of the madman who, being born a grocer or some obscure craftsman, goes mad on pride, and believes himself a king, and that the very keepers bow down to him? Can we but wonder at the washer-woman, who, in spite of rebuffs, trouble, non-payment of her due, and the hard work of every day, is yet as self-opinioned, ay, and more so, than the grandest duchess in the universe? If we probe men of the world, men of probity, men of position, and great givers of charity, we shall often find self at the bottom of all. Self goes with us to bed; it rises with us in the morning; we carry it to our counting houses; the priest puts it on with his vestments; it kneels with the layman at his prayers.

This obtrusion of self takes place at a very early age, no one shall say at how early an age. That intense introvisionist, Jean Paul Richter, tells us, among the many valuable things he lets us know, that one afternoon, when a 'very young child,' he witnessed the birth of Self Consciousness. 'I was standing in the outer door, and looking leftward at the stack of the fuel-wood, when, all at once, the internal vision "I am a Me (*ich bin ein Ich*)" came like a flash of heaven before me, and in gleaming light ever afterwards continued; then had my ME, for the first time, seen itself, and for ever. Deceptions of memory are scarcely conceivable here, in regard to an event occurring altogether within the veiled Holy-of-Holies of man.' And what a me did Jean Paul awake to! and to such, as valuable, if not as brilliant, in genius, more valuable to us-ward everyone awakes. Here, in poverty and trial—which a 'comfortable' Englishman cannot realise, which is too like starvation for a workhouse child in England to experience—this Prince of Thinkers first welcomed his ME. Here Egotism was a psalm of joy. And why not? There is no crying over a frozen and miserable youth in Jean Paul. 'On the whole,' says his biographer, 'it is not by money, or money's worth, that man lives and has his being. Is not God's universe *within* our heads, whether there be a torn skull-cap or a king's diadem *without*. Let no one imagine that Paul's young years were unhappy; still less that

he looks back on them in a lachrymose, sentimental manner, with the smallest symptom either of boasting or whining.'

Yet, universal as it is, we are not wise unless we conquer it. We must go out of self to judge self, or we shall be ever bewitched by toys and gewgaws, and made blind in our own despite. When *Maria*, in the 'Twelfth Night' of Shakspeare, wishes to punish *Malvolio*, she gets on his blind side by his egotism. And yet there can be little doubt that *Malvolio* is a very wise and capable man when his egotism is laid aside; but with it he is 'an affection'd (affected) ass, that cons state without book, and utters it by great swarths; the best persuaded of him*self*, so crammed, as he thinks, with excellencies, *that it is his ground of faith, that all that look on him love him;* and on that vice in him will my revenge find notable cause to work.'

We laugh at the comedy, but are ourselves guilty of the motive which is its groundwork. Many of us being young, still think, after many rebuffs, that we are pleasant fellows, and are pretty sure to be welcomed in any company. There is not a man of us but believes in his heart of hearts that he could win the affections of the best, prettiest, and finest girl in the world, if he had fair chance and time to propose to her. Tell B that A has really a natural antipathy to him, and thinks him odious; and he says, 'Hate me! Come, hang it, now, that is *too absurd*.'

Every man believes in his personal influence. The business can never go on without him. The boys that are to succeed him will overthrow all that he has built up; 'the mice will play when the cat's away;' there will be quite a hole in the world when *he* falls through. But time should gently wean us of all that: it should teach us the best lesson, and the last—to distrust ourselves, to know our own weaknesses, to be generous to the weaknesses of others, and to praise and acknowledge their goodness and wisdom. The whole task of life is to conquer self; the whole wisdom is to know self. Finally, self-abasement and self-judgment are so highly rated, that the remission of all other judgment is awarded to them by St. Paul. 'Let a man examine himself,' he writes; 'for if we would judge *ourselves*, we should not be judged.' It may be that the last Great Judgment of all will be that made possible by true light and knowledge, and will be passed with regard to ourselves upon ourselves.

CHAPTER II.

THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.

CHAPTER II.

'I'—Self and its Importance—Conscience.

IT is the chief concern of each and of all of us. With that personal pronoun for a title, there is no knowing what the subject of an essay may be; it may be upon egotism, selfishness, idiosyncrasy, the journal in which the article appears, or upon the peculiarities of man or men. Hartley Coleridge would have written the sweetest and most heart-piercing of verses upon it; and Hazlitt would have given us a rare discourse respecting his own inner feelings upon personal peculiarities; Montaigne would have urged that he did not like roast pork, nor to say prayers standing, or would have told a ridiculous story about the strength of his father's thumbs. These might very well come in as concerning 'I.' What WE at present are about to do is to write about the conscience, that kingdom within our kingdom, the inner spiritual force.

Now upon the conscience much has been written—a great deal more than has been thought thoroughly out; and lately, Professor Maurice, of Cambridge, has, in a lecture, emitted a sentence which has given us our key-note. He strikes at once upon the fact that there are individual existences; that man is actually above the animals, not only by Darwin and Huxley's natural selection, but by an inner something. Here is his startling question:—

'Does the word *I* seem to you an unpractical word, one which only concerns shadows? You do not act as if this were so. You do not speak as if this were so. You are rather angry if reverence is withdrawn from the word. In making your calculations about the doings of other men or of your own, is it not your maxim that this *I* is entitled to a primary consideration?'

And then he shows—we have printed the above sentence separately, so that you may read its simple words over again—that the moralist takes hold of 'I,' and that, having established the fact that there is an 'I,' a fact we all of us act upon, an internal business of mental action and of responsibility is established, and that 'I' has a conscience, that it is, as Jean Paul proves, something which exists within, which is pleased, satisfied, wounded, excited, or deadened.

Now nobody will dispute that there is an 'I;' even very modest persons find that out, although late in life. When a boy, with a sad home and a severe father, who,

as most fathers do, probably with an idea that it is the right thing to do, snubbed his children severely, a writer remembers now the pleasurable feeling with which the conscious 'I' reasserted itself. A dispute occurring, a very timid remark from the boy settled it; and, much applauded, the thought burst upon him, 'And so I am not a blockhead after all.' So the Italian artist asserted his personality by the exclamation, 'And I, too, am a painter!'

It is astonishing how the 'I' can be crushed out of a person. There are some nations and peoples to whom others have been so cruel, that the whole notion of a distinctive existence seems to have died away from them; and then comes the most cruel part of all history: their very humiliation and subjection are pleaded as a cause and excuse for further tyranny. But we cannot pursue that part of the subject further, however interesting, save to say that the 'I,' which is so crushed out of a people that it will hug its fetters, and rejoice in its humiliation, can be banished by sin from a man's heart, so that he shall rejoice in being vicious and cruel; and this may happen to him very early in life. We remember at school having heard a big lubberly blackguard of a boy say, with some kind of remorse, 'Why, I have not made any of the little beggars cry to-day!' He was the bully of the school. So Tiberius Cæsar is said to have regretted that the whole world had not but one neck, so that by

a stroke he could sever it. He was the bully of the world. In both these cases the conscience had become thoroughly warped, seared, and misled; so that, instead of being a guide fit to be trusted, it became a misleader, and, indeed, led its owner into destruction rather than salvation.

But, after all, what is the conscience? some reader may ask; and the question in this material age is not an unnatural one. Some may deny that it exists at all; others may assert that it is so much modified by education and civilization, that it may almost be said to be a mere product of the latter. Some even assert that it is the result of Christianity and of Christian teaching; and others, again, laugh at it as a thing easily dispensed with, and sent to sleep if it makes us uncomfortable. It will be well to answer these objections, and to state what Conscience really is. It is a power given us whereby we may judge our own actions, and by which each man may condemn or acquit himself immediately, or shortly after, an action on his part has taken place. Some persons define it as the faculty by which we distinguish what is right from what is wrong. Gessner says that it may be derived from *con*, together with, and *scire*, to know; so that you at once know what you have done. Others put it as derived from *scientia communis*, the common or general in-dwelling knowledge of man. Chaucer uses the word so as to mean a soft and sweet feeling. Speaking of the

Prioresse in his Prologue, he says that she felt the loss even of her dogs :—

> But sore wept she if on of hem were dede,
> Or if men smote it with a yerdë smert;
> And all was conscience and tendre herte.

Can anything be prettier than this picture of sweet inward feeling? In Fabian we find the history of Cordelia, on which Shakspeare founded his 'Lear,' and Cordelia appealing to her father thus: 'Most reverend fader, whereas my ii susters have dissynylyd with the, but I may not speke to the otherwyse then my Conscyence ledyth me.' 'Conscience,' says Dr. South, 'is a Latin word, although with an English termination, and, according to the very notation of it, imports a double or joint knowledge,—to wit, one of a Divine law or rule, the other of a man's own action; and so is properly the application of a general law to a particular instance of practice.' Lastly, we may cite Sharp's 'Sermons':—'Conscience, taken in general, is nothing less than a man's judgment or persuasion concerning moral good or evil, or concerning what he ought to do, or what he ought not to do, and what he lawfully may do.' Bishop Jeremy Taylor ought, indeed, to be an authority on the 'Conscience,' for we have before us his celebrated folio, 'Ductor Dubitantium, or the Rule of Conscience in all her General Measures'; and therein he debates hundreds of 'cases of conscience,'—cases, by the way, which we

should think ought, for the most part, never to be debated. Indeed, when a man too easily makes a question of what he should do, we may depend that, conscientiously, he ought not to do it. When a man begins to ask himself whether he should take another potato, another slice of meat, or another glass of grog, we may depend upon it that he has no need of the indulgence. People who indulge in these questions are rightly called 'casuists'; they put the case or cases (*casus*), and debate whether a thing be right or wrong; and with us the casuist has a very bad name, almost as bad as a Jesuit. But this should hardly be. A disciple of the society called by the holy name of Jesus should be a good man; one whose conscience is so tender that he debates every little point about his actions, should be good too. But the world, especially the Protestant world, has found out, with a rough-and-tumble logic, and a ready reason, that these people who are always debating what is right and what is wrong are the very people to go wrong. So also even Catholic sovereigns, and the Popes themselves, have found that the Jesuits are not wholly worthy of the blessed name that they have assumed.

The truth is, if we begin to quarrel and to debate with our conscience, we are sure to be in the wrong. 'God,' says Jeremy Taylor, 'has given us Conscience, to be in God's stead to us; to give us laws, and to exact obedience to those laws; to punish them that prevaricate, and to

reward the obedient. Therefore Conscience is called the Household Guardian, the Domestick God, the Spirit or Angel of the Place; and when we call God to witness, we only mean that our Conscience is right, *and that God and God's vicar, our conscience*, know it.' Here, then, is the solution of the whole difficulty of priesthood; here is the final appeal; here is the proof of the eternal truth delivered by our Lord, 'The kingdom of God is within you.' You and I, the universal I, all of us, have within us a domestic God or Judge. He knows whether we do right or wrong; he is always with us. I cannot escape him; I carry him with me wherever I go, because it is 'I.' Finally, a modern poet tells us that we take this vicar of God with us into judgment, and that it alone condemns us. He gives a fearful picture of a guilty one before God at the last day :—

> He cannot plead, his throat is choked,
> Sin holds him in her might;
> And, self-condemn'd, he slideth down
> To an eternal night!
>
> The ranged angels, great white throne,
> The whole Almighty quire,
> Fade out; the Father's sapphire gaze
> Grows molten in its ire.

It is quite possible that this visionary picture is a true one, and that the condemnation which the wicked will undergo may be self-pronounced.

In Hebrew there is no proper word for Conscience, the heart signifying the same thing; as, 'oft-times thine own heart knoweth.' St. Paul refers us to it as to an infallible guide: they who use the testimony of conscience 'have the law written in their hearts'; and St. John, divinely inspired, cries out, 'If our conscience condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.' And why is this? A holy father shall answer you with an irrefragable truth: 'Because,' says Origen, 'no man knows the things of a man but the spirit of a man that is within him; and that is the spirit of our conscience.' Happily, too, not only do Christian writers, but heathens, 'benighted heathens,' as we ignorantly call them, appeal to this. Socrates was guided, he tells us, by an inner light—his Dæmon, or small and special god—his conscience, which told him what to do and when he did wrong; and he, perceiving this, did not worship the gods with external show so much as others did, but sought chiefly to obey the lead of this guide, which he did not hesitate to say he always found right. Even when in prison, escaping which he might have avoided a shameful death, this greatest of all heathens remained true to the inner guide, and waited for its promptings. As they came not, he prepared to die. He did not reproach his judges: 'You,' he said, 'go on your ways, having unjustly condemned me; I go to a prison, thence to die; but which is best, God only knows.' Probably no death-bed can

be cited—and there are many that are historical in their interest—that is so full of calm philosophic courage, and of the workings of conscience, as this of Socrates.

Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius are two other brilliant examples of men who were not Christians, and who yet constantly referred to an in-dwelling spirit—to the conscience, in fact. You will find Marcus Aurelius, in his meditations, continually solacing himself with such a thought as 'Well, the world troubles me very much; there are a thousand hindrances to live a happy life; life itself is too short to be certain. No matter, we have in us a guide and rule, which will always tell us whether we be right or wrong. Let us satisfy that, and we shall be happy.' Cicero also speaks of having a conscious inner feeling, and being guided by it. Our latest writer on this subject leads us irresistibly to the conclusion that we have a conscience, and to a safer conclusion than ever Roman Catholic casuist could arrive at, namely, that the conscience does not need a priestly or tyrannical guide. 'It asks for laws, not rules; for freedom, not chains; for education, not suppression.' In fact, the conscience being 'I,' needs a fatherly love to bring it into the full light, not to be frightened by bugbears, nor to be tied down by false laws and foolish restrictions.

Many amusing instances might be given of the curious rules which men have set up for the governance of Conscience. Much as we venerate Bishop Taylor, one can

hardly look with entire satisfaction on his great book. In fact, there is not much to be said upon the subject. If you think that any action is wrong, you may rely that it is so. One hardly needs to put a case for this, although of course one can imagine many in which an innocent action would be guilty, or a guilty action innocent. *That* may apply to the action, but not to the actor. Thus A, who is a married man, saw a beautiful young lady, veiled, and in the dusk; he immediately paid court to her and kissed her, not knowing it was his own wife. Of course A is guilty here, although in fact he is innocent: he does no harm to any one; he only debases himself. This simple consideration will put an end to the delusive opinion of many untaught people; amongst others, of Burns, the poet, who says, somewhere in his letters, that the consequence of an action makes its guilt. If B does not harm anybody by his thefts, his follies, his incontinency, and other sins, B is to be held guiltless. Such is Burns' theory. The fact is, B is still guilty. We bring him before a superior Court. Within his heart sits a Judge, the Vicar of the Great Spirit. He alone can accuse or excuse.

One rule in Taylor's great book is very sound, and that is, that 'all consciences are to walk by the same rule, and that which is just to one is so to all in the like circumstances. This makes it,' says the bishop, 'that

two men may be damned for doing two contradictions : as a Jew may perish for not keeping of his Sabbath, and a Christian for keeping it ; a thorough iconoclast for breaking images, and another for worshipping them ; for eating, and for not eating ; for coming to church, or for staying at home.' You see all is referred to the one judge. Taylor gives many amusing instances. We will cite one, and then leave a most interesting subject to the reader's consideration. 'Autolycus robbed the gardens of Trebonius, a private citizen, who forgave him. Then Trebonius was chosen consul, and Autolycus robbed him again ; Trebonius thereon condemned him to the gallows, because he could forgive an injury done to himself, but not one done to the State : she only could forgive that.' It is only the other day that the same rule obtained. A policeman, acting under Commissioner Mayne's too sweeping and cruel order, seized a gentleman's dog ; the owner gave the policeman a thrashing, and the magistrate said he was right, because being a plain-clothes man (vulgarly called a detective) the gentleman had a right to suppose that he was a thief. Had, however, the man been covered by the Queen's uniform, the gentleman would have been severely punished. Lastly, we have all heard of the phrase, 'When you are at Rome do as Rome does.' Here is an instance and a reason. 'He that fasted in Ionia and Smyrna,' says Taylor, 'upon a Saturday was a schismatic ; and so was

he who did not fast upon that day at Milan and Rome, both upon the same reason.

> 'Cum fueris Romæ, Romano vivito more;
> Cum fueris alibi, vivito sicut ibi;

("When at Rome live after the Roman manner; when elsewhere, follow the custom which there prevails;") because he was to conform to the custom of Smyrna as well as Milan in their respective dioceses.' To conclude, it is useless to load the conscience with vain rules, to take oaths against eating meat or drinking wine, for where we do so we only lay a trap for ourselves to fall in; but it is most useful to let conscience have free play, to consider what the end of life is, and why above us, yet in us, presides this mysterious judge, this secret spy which knows all our 'evil and corrupt affections;' and yet, blessed be God, knows our trials and our triumphs too.

CHAPTER III.

OF MANLY READINESS.

CHAPTER III.

Valour—The Workers in Life—The Norse-Man—Hamlet on Readiness—Procrastination—The Winning Moment—Making up 'Minds'—Self-Help—Early Rising—Readiness.

VALOUR, which some will spell after the Roman fashion, 'Valor' (obliterating that which delicately marks the transition state from that tongue, in which we received the word), signifies worth. Actually, it is value, which was once written 'valure,' and a valourous man was one who would win his way by worth and readiness, capacity, ability, boldness. A manly, ready man, first in war, first in love, and equal to the occasion, was the man to be esteemed. Not that fighting alone was ever to be solely commended. 'There could not produce enough come out of *that*!' says a quaint thinker. 'I suppose the right good fighter was oftenest also the right good forest feller

—the right good improver, discerner, doer, and worker of every kind; for the true valour, different enough from ferocity, is the basis of all: a more legitimate kind of valour, that showing itself against the untamed forests and dark brute powers of Nature, to conquer Nature for us.'

Truly, then, a valiant man is the true man, if we read this rightly. He is, according to the sound heraldic motto of a noble family, 'Ready, aye ready.' Whether to do or to die, it matters little to such a man, seeing that, in the battle of human life, each moment a valiant man goes forth, and lays down his life.

And this he does without thinking, in an honest, straightforward way, taking as his wages, for the most part, hard work and hard living, and looking straight into the future, without much hope of improvement. That is the case with most of us. On this little angle-land—this piece of earth rescued from the yeasty waves of the Atlantic and German Oceans, blown over by chilling winds from the north-east, and watered with warm showers from the south-west—on this fragment, split from the rest of Europe, and shaped much like a scraggy leg of mutton, with Scotland for a knuckle end, there are, we will say, about nineteen millions of English men and women, and three millions of Scots; and of these twenty-two millions, nineteen at least work from day to day without much promise of making a fortune, yet content to see others possess houses and lands, horses and fine clothes. There may be a million of

well-to-do land, fund, and property holders, who 'live at home at ease,' and laugh at to-morrow; but there are certainly not more : and *nous autres* are obliged to be up and doing, as busy as ants in their hill, bees in their hive, or a moving mass of mites in a cheese, tumbling over each other, and doing all in our power to do the best for ourselves.

Now, just as much as a man drives out fear, marches boldly on, says his say, does his act, so much is he a valiant man. In the old Norse legends it was indispensable to be brave. Odin cast out of his heaven, the *Valhalla*, all who were tainted with cowardice; and over a battle-field, the priests taught, went the *Valkyrs*, or choosers of the slain, heavenly messengers, or angels, who took care only to admit the valiant. The kings, when about to die, having missed, we will suppose, their right opportunity of getting properly knocked on the head in battle, lay down in a ship, which, with its sails set, drifted out into the ocean, charged with fire, too, in the hold, so that the king might blaze in his tomb, and be delivered to the sky and ocean. Others cut themselves and marked their bodies with honourable wounds, so that Odin might, peradventure, be deceived, and take them in. So, too, they loved Thor as well as Odin; and Uhland finds it a trait of 'right honest strength, that the old Norse heart finds its friend in the Thunder-God.'

There is a great deal more in Shakspere's notion of

readiness, or a perpetual and ever-present spring of valour, than even in the Norse suggestions. To the philosophical *Hamlet* it is clear as light that a brave submission to the decrees of Providence is to be accounted of equal value with righteousness itself. 'If it be now, 'tis not to come,' he says of death; 'if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come: *the readiness is all.*'

It would be well if we all bore this grand truth in our minds. If we did, the craning of our necks after impossible altitudes, the straining of our consciences, and the bent of our minds would be done away with. 'Be ye *ready*, therefore,' is the constant injunction in the Bible. There is in all well-bred animals an ease, readiness, and cheerfulness in work that is superior to some men; but those men are little better than fools. There are whole nations that have lain in the background, with regard to others, grumbling, fretting, worrying, and going backwards, simply because they were never ready to face their true position. Whereas the Scots, with about as poor a land as they well could have, have by industry and valour kept their heads not only above water, but have placed themselves foremost in the world. Yet, what a small people it is, multiplying fast truly, sending out colonists, and fixing on a new Scotland, and settling themselves readily to work, fighting in the middle ages, filling the armies of France and Germany with the most trusted

guards, and ready in the present day to merge into gardeners or farmers. In one state they are as good as another — a shrewd, patient, hardy, brave nation; a people seldom to be enough praised, seeing that we are plagued with others whom we have always to help, who cry against their landlords, their land, their Church, their climate, their position, and even against themselves; who perpetually grumble, but do not get on.

Readiness is not only manly, but generous. This, we have said before, in pointing out with what vigour well-bred horses work, and well-bred dogs hunt: for *generosus*, which we read as an equivalent to liberality, means simply well-bred, of a good stock; and the generous giver, the liberal man, is ever the ready man. It is lucky that it is so. There are so many hindrances, such coldness, deadness, and delay everywhere, that, if it were not for some forward and excellent spirits, the world would forget itself to marble, and little or nothing would be done; for the unready, if not always close and mean, carry this kind of reflection about them,—they are fond of putting things off; they find it convenient to wait; what they have to do will be done quite as well to-morrow, and so on.

Such people no doubt have their use. They are the dead weight which keeps the coach steady, the ballast which trims the boat; but, in another way, they are worse than useless: they are dangerous in the extreme. When Doctor Young wrote his poems there was a vile Latin

style prevalent, which made him use long foreign Latinised words, instead of their equivalent in plain English. His words, with these long-tailed terminations, have been easily seized upon as very useful to pedantic writing-masters : thus the capital line,—

Procrastination is the thief of time,

has been repeated so often, that it has almost lost its meaning. Suppose anyone were to render the line in plain English, and say, 'Putting things off till to-morrow steals away our lives,' he would be thought to have said something original. The-putter-off-till-to-morrow, the next-day-man, or the *procrastinator*, is truly an individual not at all to be trusted. He rises late, and is always behind time; yet he seems to imagine—only it is impossible that he should do so—that he can run a race against time, and overtake yesterday, so as to snatch back the two hours he lost doing nothing. John Gaspar Lavater, the great physiognomist, made a shrewd remark about such a one. He said of him that, having prorogued to-day's honesty till to-morrow, he would probably prorogue it till next day, and so on until eternity. So *Macbeth*, when thinking of the passage of time, cries out, in an agony of doubt and scorn,—

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death.

Yes, truly; and the majority of such fools are fools very like ourselves, who were not ready. A great general is, according to Napoleon, to be distinguished from an inferior one by always being a quarter of an hour beforehand. It is by that little quarter of an hour that the battles have ever been won. When once the mind is made up, the best way is to act at once. Promptitude, readiness, quickness, is, after all, as efficient as anything, and should always be urged as an essential to thorough efficiency. When once anything has been brought to a proper and a clearly defined shape, the best way is 'to go in and win.' If you wait, you will find reflection come upon you, and check your horse at the leap; if you do the thing at once, you will succeed. A well-known newspaper projector and proprietor had an idea brought to him by a man who was not rich enough to bring the paper out himself. It is the rule of the world that almost all the discoverers and inventors have not sufficient capital to float their discoveries; and so it was with our poor projector, who urged his capital idea on the capitalist with all the determination he could. However, the man with the money required time to think and to feel the pulse of the public. Would the public care about a comic paper? Would there be enough people to buy it? Would there be enough comic talent to support it? All these questions took a long time to settle; but at last the gentleman made up his mind that the notion was a capital one, and that he would embark in it. He went

therefore in a hurry along the Strand to Stationers' Hall to register the idea, and met a man carrying a placard, announcing the publication of 'Punch,' a new comic serial, to be published every week! That was the very publication which he wished to register; but it had passed out of his hands for ever!

Rashness is of course not to be commended, but it is better than perpetual unreadiness. 'Men first make up their minds,' wrote Archbishop Whately (and the smaller the mind, the sooner it is made up), 'and then seek for the reasons.' The witticism is not a new one with the archbishop; nor of course is it not wholly true. There is a class of mind considerably smaller than the readily made up mind, and that is the vacillating, shifty, trembling, hesitating mind, that is never made up at all. Decision of character and promptitude are always signs of greatness. It is the little fellow, the timid animal with a brain not so big as that of a hen pheasant, that goes fluttering about from one thing to another, and never decides for himself until he lets death decide for him; and then, as a modern writer has it, when the woodman's cry is heard, and we know that where the tree falls it must lie, a dreadful voice will thus shout in his ear,—

> The dead past life has pass'd, and no more
> Can you act the old foolishness o'er:
> You've your tally—'tis ten and threescore.

So take up the dark lamp,—come on:
It don't matter: you now must be gone;
And the fool and his folly are one.

We make the world we live in. If our young men could, instead of hoping for some one to help them, thoroughly believe *that*, what an alteration world there be. It is the men who are reduced to 'first principles,' who begin with nothing, who are untrammelled by false hopes —begot by falser friends—who make their way. Were we to be as active here, and as ready to help ourselves as the colonists of South Australia and America are, does anyone suppose that we should have the mass of pauperism that eats into our charities, blots our civilisation, and hardens our hearts? When you are learning to swim, the teacher who may have given you some necessary support, suddenly takes that away and bids you strike out. You would have timidly clung to that support long after it was needless, but for him. With a shrinking timidity, and almost horror, you obey the impulse of his voice, and strike out, and, oh what pleasure! find that you can swim. So, again, half the defeats in life are occasioned by want of sticking out, by the disease of unreadiness, rather than by adverse circumstance, and more than half of the miserable regrets in life arise from the bitterly remembered moments which were wasted when so much might have been achieved.

One very common result of want of readiness is ill-temper. This is not only produced upon others who witness it, and are the victims of want of decision, but on the unready persons themselves. A certain young lady (and of how many can this be said which is so true of one!) had a habit of debating whether she should rise or not at eight o'clock in the morning, and generally carried on this lazy unready debate so long that it was nine before she got down. A direct consequence of this was that she was very angry with herself, and even if no word was said, felt miserable and at a discount. The unreadiness, begun in the morning, communicated itself to every other hour in the day: too late for breakfast, too late for dinner, too late for tea; a miserable ten minutes or a quarter of an hour behind time; and upon this hung the comfort, peace, and happiness of a whole family. In a burlesque essay the 'Saturday Review,' some years ago, insisted that early rising was a bad and an unchristian thing, because it made a man so thoroughly well satisfied with himself for all the day afterwards. He was too well pleased, too happy, to be good. Perhaps no stronger reason, and it is a very true and exact one, could be given in favour of early rising.

The reverse holds good with lateness. Not to be ready for church, not to be ready for dinner, not to sit down to tea till all others are placed,—these seem small faults, but

they make too many families essentially miserable. It is little use if we say that a wife has no other fault but that of never being *up to time*: that is enough to make any household a miserable one; and it is worse when the head of the family is afflicted with a like disease. All mankind is weak, afflicted with infirmities, has its fears, its cowardices, its doubts, and thus it is easily led away from its purpose. When a nation is afflicted with the disease, it will very quickly fall into a certain want, desuetude, and decay. When any great part of the nation is thus afflicted —as our present House of Lords seems afflicted—it will be well to cut and prune away that part, so that the other be not poisoned by it. Speculation, doubt, a weighing of matters over and over again, is not the chief end of man; it is prompt and energetic action. No proficiency in knowledge, cultivation, poetry, or the fine arts, can give a man anything like compensation for a want of decision, —a want of command over himself and his faculties. Reduce him to an aimless, actionless man, and you make less than an automaton of him. He will dally with and fritter away all the fine qualities he has, and become more contemptible than the untaught man, who does his little after his own small light. Readiness is especially a Christian virtue. The highest Voice that ever spake has cried out to us, 'Therefore be ye also *ready*,' and has, in the beautiful Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins,

urged with the greatest possible strength the folly of delay; for while we are horrified at the blank despair of those who were shut out in outer darkness, we read that 'they that were *ready* went in with Him.'

CHAPTER IV.

THE HEROIC IN LIFE.

CHAPTER IV.

A Savage Young Couple—Love—The Heroic—Self-Delusion—Effeminate Heroes—A Narrow Age—True Heroism.

IN the Malay Archipelago, the pirates of which that great, good, and tender-hearted hero, Sir James Brooke, of Borneo, punished with judicial severity, man-slaying is a proof of greatness. In the island of Ceram no one is allowed to marry till he has cut off one human head at least. Angelina whispers to Edwin, 'Now you know we might settle and be a brutal and idolatrous young couple, only you have not done that murder.' The head of a child will do, that of a woman is better, because she can cry out and kick and fight, or she is cunning enough to hide herself; but the head of a man is the best, and the head of a white man the most glorious trophy of all. On the surf-beaten coast many a good British vessel has gone to pieces, and the tired sailor, who has fought with the waves for dear life, and has escaped the hungry sea, has

been brained by some lurking savage, and his head, with his fair English curls dabbled in blood, has been carried to some dark-skinned bride, or even worse, sold to some savage 'swell,' whose coward heart would not permit him to be a hero without it.

For, twisted, bent, refracted, contorted, and miserably retorted, as this custom is by the baseless legends of the cruel and lying process of a bloody idolatry, it in some measure represents hero worship. Bad as the stupid savage must be who knocks a baby on the head, and fancies that he is doing a noble action, we may distil some kind of goodness out of him. Action is better than inaction; to have done even that small amount of murder is nobler in his opinion than to have done nothing. What he selfishly desires is to be distinguished; the blunder-headed, greedy, blear-eyed, glittering shark-toothed, murderous savage, he, too, would be a hero.

We all have heroes and heroines—of a sort. Some pick out those who are distinguished from other men solely by their good looks, platonically supposing that to look good and to be good are the same; others will demand cleverness; others will throw aside excellence of form if they can get excellence of genius, capacity, or goodness. 'I did not marry my husband,' said a lady, 'for beauty, but for brain.'—'I would rather,' said another, 'have a handsome fool than an ugly philosopher; I will please my eye, but I will plague my heart.' A

third will follow out Goldsmith's excellent plan, which he puts down at the beginning of the 'Vicar of Wakefield,' 'I chose my wife as she chose her wedding gown, not for beauty of material, but because it would last a long time.' But put it how people may, there are very few of the young who marry who fall in love with the real, actual, living person they see.

It may be exceedingly annoying to Jones, but it is quite true that his little wife loves an ideal Jones, some one whom her imagination dresses up as a far different and far nobler being than Jones himself.

Amelia, in 'Vanity Fair,' thinks that there is no one nobler, no one more clever, nobody handsomer than her George Osborne; and he is not wise enough to see (and how happy are we who are not wise enough!) that the girl dotes upon her beautiful, her pure, her noble ideal—that all her heart has gone out to meet the big hero she has tricked out with the rainbow colours of love, and that she does not even know the selfish prig of a citizen's son, who struts about in his bones, his flesh, his good looks, his blue eyes, his curls, and his clothes.

Do any people love us solely for ourselves? Have we ever dared to strip off the mask of every-day actions, of pretended piety, of honesty which was policy, of generosity which was advertisement, of firmness which arose from stupidity, of activity which had root in fear? Save you, Mr. Smith: you are an Elder in your chapel and

Mayor of your town; your name, the local paper tells us, adorns the annals of the British merchant; you are a self-made man, a paragon of uprightness, industry, and honour. How much of this is true?—how much does it differ from the character of that other Mr. Smith whom you yourself and your Creator only know! From an innate feeling of unworthiness we get the proverb, 'No man is a hero in the eyes of his valet;' an untrue proverb of real heroes, who are more heroic the more truly we know them, but a true one of most men, who are best at a distance, and cannot be known intimately. And what is said here of men may be applied to women with even greater force. They live in a little world by themselves. To the generous boy each one is a sacred and beautiful thing, full of generosity and self-sacrifice, existing as his mother, only to comfort him in sickness and to dower him with love; as his sister, only to shield and to aid him, to cover his faults and to plead his excuses; as his sweetheart, as something more beautiful than common humanity, some piece of Nature's handiwork of the finest porcelain, while he is of common clay. Too often marriage changes these heroines into mere women, of common vulgar passions; somewhat worse because weaker than ourselves.

The worship of the heroic is a very pretty pastime, and should be encouraged. We are best acquainted with it in that which some have called its birthplace, Greece,

where the heroes were gifted with almost divine honours, and were said to have performed innumerable great deeds. The twelve labours of Hercules and the deeds of Orpheus were the wonder of the young men of Greece; and the most entrancing poet of antiquity has given in his 'Iliad' a gallery of heroes from the brave Achilles and noble Hector, the reflecting and patient Ulysses, to the terrible Ajax, and the aged essence of wisdom, Nestor. It is well that in the youth of the world we find qualities that are truly admirable placed among the heroic. As time runs on, we find other story-tellers inventing other heroes, but we never find them altogether untrue to that which is noble. Bravery and strength, good fortune and skill in man, are always worshipped in the rudest romances. Sir Guy of Warwick, Sir Bevis of Hampton, and the whole round of chivalric heroes, are always ready to shield the weak, to punish the strong, to help distressed damsels, and to fight giants. The mediæval romances which turned the brain of Don Quixote were good so far, at least, or that noble gentleman would never have been fired into madness by reading them. Each hero, like Artegal, in Spenser's 'Faëry Queen,' has a mission. His main object is, as we know, to rescue Irena from the tyranny of Grantosto; but while on that mission he is ever ready to turn aside from his way to repress violence, to rescue innocence, and to punish the spirit of mischief, folly, and cruelty. Such a determination would be heroic

at any time; and happily we find the ideal hero of the modern romance just as ready as Palladius or Musidorus, or any of the noble heroes of Sidney's charming 'Arcadia.'

The fashions of these ideal beings, however, change with the times. In this very 'Arcadia,' when any one goes to fight, he is always not only equal but superior to the occasion. We have been taunted with the fact that in our nautical dramas we made our one sailor always equal to three Frenchmen. One he killed with his cutlass, another with his pistol, and a third he knocked down with his quid of tobacco. So these very gentlemen, Palladius and Musidorus, are gifted with enormous fighting powers; and even Shakspere, whose heroes are in general nature itself, has made his Orlando, a mere stripling, overthrow and nearly kill the 'Duke's bony prizer,' when he wrestles. It is not every young man who can stand up against a prize-fighter and beat him; but that is little in the life of a hero.

After the grand romance in which the heroes had the strength of gods, and the heroines a divine beauty, troubled with superhuman sorrows, there came a time when people sickened of great fighters and noble fellows, and took to *beaux* and rakes as heroes. The hero of the play or the book in those times dwindled down to an effeminate creature, who had a woman's complexion and more than a woman's vanity; who warbled amorous ditties, and was content to be made love to; did not like

fighting, and was as feeble as he was effeminate. There are signs that we have returned to this sort of creature in our plays and novels, and that such heroes are mostly drawn by the women. 'Nothing is more apparent in Mrs. ——'s novels,' said a reviewer, a few weeks ago, 'than the tendency that the women have to make love to the men.' In the very popular play of 'Our American Cousin,' an actor evolved out of his own brain a most odious, although cleverly conceived character, *Lord Dundreary*, who could not speak, look, talk, or walk; who was selfish, stupid, cunning, and mean, as the women say, 'to a degree;' who, in most matters of life, was no better than a half-witted creature; and yet the ladies accepted him at once as a hero. The prettiest girl in the piece had to make love to him, and to be blunderingly accepted; and this whole reversal of all that is true and noble, of all, in fact, that is heartily funny and laughable, was accepted, and is accepted now, with considerable applause, by the unthinking.

The vicious and effeminate heroes of Congreve's days, men who are always plotting against some woman's honour, some husband's peace, cheating some confiding father or gentle wife, still retained a certain amount of courage, that quality being always essential to man; but beyond that, they had scarcely one human virtue. Fielding, with a high scorn for what is effeminate in man,

makes his heroes strong as well as brave and generous, and especially open, bold, and manly.

His *Tom Jones* has a good appetite, can drink, eat, fight, make love, and enjoy himself, and is quite a different being from a coxcomb. For a time his healthy school prevailed, until we got into a more romantic and sickly period, wherein every hero was bound to visit old castles, to rescue damsels, to see ghosts, and to go through much peril for the sake of a timid and shrinking heroine, who never went to bed without gazing on the moon and pouring out her complaints in a copy of verses.

The fashions of heroines had in the meantime undergone material but not such great changes. We are fond of good women in England, and our heroines are all of that excellent pattern which includes goodness; but we have had the arch, the hoydenish, the masculine, and the mawkish young lady. We have grown fond of those who were always in trouble and always shedding tears. At about this period of the history of romance the heroine very often went mad; and, as Sheridan says, when the chief lady went mad in white satin, the faithful attendant went mad in white muslin. We have even forgotten how necessary it was for a heroine to have a faithful attendant to whom she could pour out her sorrows, and who always at the right time brought the ladder of ropes to enable her to escape from the cruel father. Nay, our very fathers have ceased to be cruel; such is

fashion in romance : and, more wondrous change still, our Frenchmen now are polite, generous, brave, and very accomplished fellows. Formerly we only used Johnny Crapaud to laugh at ; he was always starved, and priest and king-ridden, as Hogarth coarsely wrote—

> With lantern jaws and croaking guts
> The braggart Frenchman proudly struts.

And yet our Plantagenet wars, and our wars under Marlborough, ought to have made us respect that most honourable, gallant, and brave nation that lives across the Channel. Never had one nation a more constant and gallant foe, always ready to fight, and always with spirit and honour, than had England in the French.

After the romantic hero, there succeeded, led on by Henry Mackenzie, the sentimental, soft, reflective, and very good hero, the Man of Feeling, whose heart was open as the day to melting charity, and who never did a good action, or relieved a case, without quoting a fine mouth-rounding sentiment, such as, 'The man who will see his humble brother starve while he has plenty is unworthy of,' &c. ; or if he defended a woman from a ruffian, he would use the celebrated formula, 'The man who would raise his hand against a woman, save in the way of *kyindness*, is unworthy of the name of a British seaman.' But this sort of hero was altogether too good for the British public, and did not last long. It is a cruel

thing to say, but it is true,—the people, as a rule, do not believe in *good* young men. The very way to be thought really bad, is to appear to be good. These excellent young heroes produced a revolution of feeling. With something like a relief we turn from the sentimental goodness of Joseph Surface to the downright raking wickedness of Charles Surface. People could believe in one, but not in the other. It will be some years yet before the public really believes in the pattern hero.

After the sentimental hero came the utterly bad villainous fellow, the Byronic person, 'linked with one virtue and a thousand crimes,' the fellow eaten up with murders and remorse. Women shed abundant tears over this villainous puppet in black boots and blacker ringlets, and he lasted for a time, till Walter Scott brought back the pure and the noble ideal of a true, honest, able, conscientious gentleman, whom a woman can love. Counting one or two aberrations in favour of highwaymen, we have this pattern of hero now, except that some of the best men writers have despaired of drawing a hero, and have made their chief man but a negative personage, while the women have run wild with the notion that it is the province of the hero to have love made to him, not by him. Some great authors have been content to draw heroes unutterably base, under the notion that they copy from life; but these are exceptions.

Can we admire anything pure? A great noise deafens

us, too much light blinds us, large excellence makes us suspect, much goodness is all too exalted for us grovelling earth-worms. Is not the bad boy in the family a hero to his little sisters? and was not, after all, Master Tom Jones inferior to what *was seen* of Master Blifil, and yet preferred before him? We admire that which is physically perfect, we fall to raptures over a statue, over a living Antinous; we are delighted with a horse or a bull which is a model of beauty. Why should we not equally love a noble good man and woman when we meet them? Why ostracise Aristides merely because he is called 'The Just'? Norris of Bemerton, from whom Dr. Blair and Mr. Thomas Campbell stole their 'angel-visits few and far between,' gives the precise reason why we love faulty rather than perfect heroes. It is not because they are more like ourselves, nearer to our own weakness—as if a vase with a crack could not love that which is whole—but because of the weakness of our mortal nature. For what he says of joys we may apply, without much violence, to heroes :—

> Those who soonest take their flight,
> Are the most exquisite and strong,
> Like angel-visits short and bright;
> Mortality's too weak to bear them long.

Poor Human Nature! Here, in this very quotation, is her weakness discovered. The Campbell-Blair imitation

has not half the beauty of the original, but the world prefers the paste, and rejects the diamond!

The Hero and Heroine fulfil in fiction very important functions. The author should always paint from life, but must add, of course, points which are noble, and matter which exalts. While the imagination is young and fresh, it feeds upon noble qualities; it demands truth, honesty, and bravery in its men; purity and devotion in its women. The very meanest of mankind looks to something nobler than himself; the higher natures look to something better still. The author who has sufficient skill to paint from Nature need not fear to make his hero too good, or his heroine too noble; for human nature, in every nation and in every time, while too fertile in bad things, can show instances of the grandest goodness, and of almost divine excellence.

CHAPTER V.

WHICH TREATS OF LARGE NATURES.

CHAPTER V.

'School'—The Manager—Lear and Hamlet—Money's True Power—The Age of Elizabeth—Higher Levels—But One Man Wanted—Large Minds Dominated by Small Ones—The Happy Wife—Salt of the Earth.

IN a very pretty modern comedy, which is admirably suited to its age and audience, but which an after and a wider age may perhaps look upon as feeble, if not foolish, there are one or two sentences which cause reflection. This is indeed to be wondered at, for wit and wisdom have equally been, for a long time, almost banished from our stage. 'My dear sir,' said a manager, only the other day, to an author, 'your piece is too good.' 'But you have an educated audience?' 'Yes, pretty well; they are first-rate families.' 'Well, then,' persisted the unfortunate author, '*they* can understand it.' 'Understand it!—yes,'

cried the manager, 'but hang it, man, it won't do; you make the people *think*,—*and you would empty my theatre*!'

The manager was wise in his generation. People do not go to a theatre as they once did; the newspaper, the magazine, and the thoughtful essay furnish reflective natures with enough food for the mind, and they do their thinking at home. At a theatre they expect to be amused; and, as a rule, the poorer audience, so that you do not reach the 'roughs' and 'groundlings,' is by far the wiser and better. Rich folk, who dine at seven or eight, do not desire to sit out Shakspere, with those enormous problems of his, which are so plentiful in *Hamlet* or *Lear*. Take the reflection of the guilty king at his prayers:—

> May one be pardon'd, and retain the offence?
> In the corrupted currents of this world,
> Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice;
> And oft 'tis seen, the wicked prize itself
> Buys out the law: But 'tis not so above:
> There is no shuffling; there the action lies
> In his true nature.

Or take some of the tremendous invectives of Lear against lazy luxury. Would our wealthy do-nothing classes sit and listen to them? No. Our modern plays must please to live, or they will not live to please. It is not often, therefore, that we come upon one line or sentence worth remembering or repeating.

In the comedy referred to, a rich nobleman does what

few rich noblemen have the brains or the pluck or the good fortune to do: he falls in love with a pretty pupil-teacher, who has abundance of everything in the world, except money. She has beauty, health, sense, modesty, form, learning, strength, good-nature, and sweet humility; and yet when this young lord asks her whether she has a lover, she says, 'No, my lord, because I am so poor;' upon which comes, very appropriately, though the audience hardly catches it—'*Poor!* How these great natures do mistake themselves!'

How they do indeed!—and yet scarcely so. They have all the world, or all the world that is worth having, in themselves. Money, as the author elsewhere remarks, can buy nothing that they have. 'Ten thousand a year could not fight in the Crimea, could by itself not look well, speak well, and eat well. Ten thousand a-year could not put its arm round your waist, could it?' Money is the most empty windbag in the world when you have it; when you have it not, it appears a horse of a different colour; and if 'great natures' mistake that fact, they must indeed be mistaken. But do they? What are these natures? Is one man so different from another that there is a specific difference—a larger, wider utterance—a nobler heart?

We think that there is; and not only in men, but in ages; although in no time does God leave himself without witnesses in the world, who 'stand out,' as painters

say, up and above their fellow-men, as mountains do above the plain.

Sometimes, when people are debased, we see the remains of these men, of smaller growth it may be, but yet great men, standing, like the solitary Round Towers of Ireland, to remind us of a forgotten age. Sometimes these large and beautiful natures are so unhappily born and placed that they dwindle, and become narrow. One might as well have tried to be publicly great in the days of George I. and Walpole, as an ordinary standard foot-soldier might to attain the stature of an Amalekite. The whole nation was grovelling and mean. Hogarth's pictures were sold literally dirt cheap. Shakspere could not draw an audience. An edition of him was looked at as a curiosity; and learned critics, when they did speak of him, spoke of a rude and uncultivated fellow, a wild, untaught genius, who did not know how to write a play. Cibber and Tate altered his 'Lear,' and brought Cordelia to life again. Vice was publicly taught upon the stage as a spirited thing. Everything was distraught. The finest geniuses—probably the two men who, in a nobler age, would have come nearest to Shakspere—William Collins and Thomas Chatterton, were left to die; one by melancholy madness, and the latter (poor hasty, clever, wicked boy) of the more furious and impatient madness, suicide. As for the Church, it was about as narrow as it could be, and the Nonconformists were yet worse. The

country gentlemen were mere sloths, the town inhabitants so unwise as to bury in towns such numbers of people, that the graveyards, as Evelyn remarks of Norwich in a former age, rose above the churches, which seemed sunk in holes, to the 'great detriment and poysoning,' says a doctor, of the inhabitants who lived round them. In history, and in memoirs of the time, one can see these bad times coming on. One can mark the vice or the folly, at first only obscurely condemned, then unnoticed, and then welcomed. You may perceive, as you read, the dying out of religion, poetry, and the fine arts. In portraits of the day you see the people grow uglier, more bovine, animal-like, and mindless. 'There is no fine temple,' insists the Platonist Spenser, 'but a fine spirit chooses it to dwell in.' We cannot go so far as to say that; but truly there never has been a fine or heroic age or race, as regards form and feature, but we have had fine minds and larger natures dwelling with man; and this is to be proved not only by paintings, but by books. Such plays and poems as Massinger's 'Virgin Martyr,' Spenser's 'Faëry Queen,' the poems of Robert Browning, the best novels of Charles Kingsley, or, let us say, the social writings of John Ruskin, could by no possibility have been produced under the dull German king, who hated 'boetry and bainting,' and loved only money and sensual pleasure. The texture of the minds and of the times was

utterly different. People of the one age really could not understand the other.

> Where'er a noble deed is wrought,
> Where'er a noble thought is thought,
> Our hearts in glad surprise
> To higher levels rise!

So sings the poet upon the quiet, unpretending goodness of Miss Nightingale and the small band of lady nurses in the Crimea. Unfortunately for humanity, we are forced to own that the 'higher levels' that one age achieves are often left high and dry by its succeeding age.

The larger natures amongst men and families are to be met with under the most extraordinary and unforeseen circumstances. To no one nation, family, or class does Almighty wisdom allow a monopoly of goodness. So much do children differ, that Shakspere makes one of his characters attribute the fact to the influence of a sublime and supernatural Power, rather than to education :—

> It is the stars,
> The stars above us, govern our conditions;
> Else one self mate and mate could not beget
> Such different issues.

And although some tricks of face and limb may be hereditary, and capacity and talent are often inherited, we may find many a father with a mean, grovelling, and narrow mind succeeded by a son who is quite his opposite —generous, or even profuse. The old miser, who has

scraped all his life, and has starved himself to amass money, seems to have taught his son to do exactly the reverse; the very meanness of his life has shown, by an example more potent than any amount of preaching, the folly of avarice; and the mean, penurious father produces a 'larger nature' in a profuse son. Actually, however, the selfishness of the man who dissipates is often just as great as that of him who accumulates; both are actuated by vanity, but show it in different ways. The larger nature is not necessarily profuse, although it is always generous, sometimes even to excess.

Nor does it always happen, notwithstanding the happiness which the world receives from them, that those of an expansive and generous mind are either successful men or happy in themselves. The world hardly knows where it misses them; it is brought to a lower level; it is miserable in its results. One such man will insensibly affect a whole age, just as a great general will establish or uphold an empire. There is a French anecdote about Marlborough which is here very much to the point. After the battle at Hochstadt or of Blenheim, in which Marlborough had so utterly and decisively beaten his opponents, while taking note of the prisoners the General saw a fine grenadier, stalwart, proud, and unbending, even though beaten. 'Ah,' said he in French, 'if Louis XIV. had a hundred thousand such men as you, he would carry on the war a little differently.' ''Tis not,'

said the soldier, as he saluted him, 'tis not a hundred thousand such as me that he wants, *mon général*, but one such a man as you.' So, when the mean and subtle get possession of the State, or of the direction of public opinion, when financiers, political economists of the worst class, mere speculators and traders, have the direction of public affairs, the whole tone of a nation's thoughts and actions become petty, for

Honour sinks where Commerce long prevails.

Athens and Rome, raised by heroes, fell at last to hucksters. The throne of the empire of Rome was put up to public auction, and sold to perhaps the meanest of mortals; for he who would dare to purchase a dignity without having the inherent capacity for it, must be a mean-souled hind, to be abominated and accursed with all the comminations of Lent. Happily the poor wretch was punished even by the honour he sought: the swords of the Prætorians who had sold the dignity washed away the stain in the blood of the purchaser.

The larger nature, wherever it is found, is very attractive. Smaller minds cling to it, as little particles of steel fly towards a magnetised bar. As Plutarch well saw, Brutus, who was of the breed of noble blood which Rome so soon lost, was necessary for the success of the plot against Cæsar. The narrow soul of the mean and plotting Cassius could not carry all the weight of the conspiracy.

It was necessary to attach the nobler nature; and then, as Cassius saw, others would follow. But it is observable that in that case, as in many others, the larger nature was dominated by the narrower. Cassius governed Brutus, even while he wondered at his goodness and greatness; but he did it by cunning. Generally, the mean nature is utterly opposed to the wider, because it really does not understand what the larger nature does. A painter descanting enthusiastically upon the beauties of the setting sun, turned round to his auditor, and saw upon his face a contemptuous smile. Great natures do not half so much mistake themselves as they are mistaken, and the confidence of ignorance plumply denies what it cannot understand. The larger nature, which is occupied with heavenly things, while all around it grope after things of the earth, is treated as Hamlet is by his mother in the ghost scene :—

Q. Alas, he's mad! To whom do you speak this?
H. Do you see nothing there?
Q. Nothing at all; *yet all, that is, I see.*
H. Nor did you nothing hear?
Q. *No, nothing but ourselves.*

We believe that we can see everything, and that the genius or the larger nature is romantic, flighty, and not to be trusted. We measure the world by the tape-yard we carry with us, and refuse to trust in anything beyond the rule of thumb. Very often the great nature is maddened

soured, and disappointed. He who would have made all so happy is rendered miserable; he who would have discoursed music 'most eloquent' is set to discord.

This narrowing of large views, this moral ossification of the noble heart, is a process at first so slow and imperceptible to the victim that it is very dangerous. Sometimes a great blow, a terrible loss, a sickness which makes the patient rise a new man; or a disappointment which never can be got over, will awaken him or her who is drifting towards the rapids. But ordinarily women sink quietly to the lower level, and their nobler natures die without a sign, 'what is fine within them growing coarse to sympathise with clay.' For noble natures require food, excitement, deeds, and thoughts to feed on. Do we grow hot-house grapes on the north-east wall of a poor cottage, or English pine-apples in the bare exercise yard of a workhouse? You must exercise your horses and use dumb-bells to keep up your biceps, and will you let your virtue starve? Can you feel noble amongst those who never utter a noble sentiment, or give birth to a fine thought? whose talk is of cattle, whose ambition is finer company, whose god is their gold? In our Sisterhoods, in which there is much good no doubt mixed with follies and failures, since they are human, the Principals find it necessary to send the sisters back to comfortable houses and good furniture, sound living, pictures, music, and the world, so much are their spirits saddened and deadened

by the sordid evils that they see. So, too, the soul of the large nature demands its own music, or, like the sky-lark that lives with sparrows, it becomes dumb.

And what shall a large nature do at home surrounded by small ones, each with some small grievance, each with a continuous grumble? Simply bear all, and do better. We find these people in every street; broadly speaking, there are such in every house. Too often we meet with families before whom a noble sentiment is never uttered, who never hear the voice of prayer, nor that of generosity or of compassion, except in a poem or a play. To overreach others, to succeed in life, to make money, to enjoy themselves—and even then to take a mean enjoyment—is the whole life of some. To rejoice in others' pain, to be glad when others fail, to believe that their own lot is the dullest and least to be desired, to envy all who are above them, and to take no present joy in what they have, is too often the rule of life of these poor creatures. Poor indeed! They are narrowed by their own vices, punished by their own sins; they shut their eyes and will not see, close their ears and will not hear. But from among them comes one whose life is joyous and free, and in whom not all the deadening intercourse of common life can destroy or hurt the larger nature. To her there exist all the virtues: she believes in generosity, for she is generous; in self-sacrifice, for she will deny herself; in goodness, for she is good; in

pity, for she will weep at the sorrows of others ; in smiles and laughter, for the merriment of boys and girls, and the gambols of children, will make her heart rejoice. Happy is such a one ; happy as well as great are those who refuse to take a narrow, cruel view, and who, out of the expansive nature of their own hearts, find goodness and wisdom in others. He whose example taught us to bear with all and love all, also gave us this consolation : that when we carry out His behests, we surely become the salt of the earth, the salt that preserves our very corruptible human nature from becoming corrupt, and that makes a good man's soul like a looking-glass, which, receiving the sunshine of heaven, reflects it to the dark corners of the earth, lighting up what is obscure and dismal, but losing no particle of the divine rays itself.

CHAPTER VI.

SELF-CULTURE, SELF-RESTRAINT, AND SELF-RESPECT.

CHAPTER VI.

The Tub of Diogenes—Conquerors not great—Byron's Dog—Culture of Self—Prudence: its Value—Life, beautiful and free—Men are not Machines—Self-respect—The Hermit of Hampole—Indulgences should be destroyed.

IN what kind of tub did Diogenes live? Was it an old washing-tub, shallow and broad, or long and deep, like a wine cask? It is more than two thousand two hundred and eighty years since the ragged old philosopher lived. He was not worth one penny; he never applied his notions of self-help to making money; he despised, flouted, and hated the merely rich men, the fig-merchants and oil-merchants of Athens; but his name lives, and it is pleasant to read, think, and talk of him, while not a name among those of his 'bloated' and purse-swollen contem-

poraries is familiar to any of us. How is this? That question we may be able to answer by and by.

In the meantime, what sort of tub did he live in? for we may be assured that the legend is a true one. At one time the philosopher dwelt in a deserted dog-kennel at the entrance of one of the temples; at another time it appears that he had found without an owner, and occupied, one of those huge earthen jars in which the rich Greek merchants stored their oil, and which, in that land of sunshine and blue skies, must have formed a warm and comfortable residence. Its mouth was some four feet in diameter, and its depth quite sufficient for a man to stand up in, like that of the jars of Hadgi Baba, in which the Forty Thieves took refuge. As this 'tub' lay on its side, the warm morning sun streaming down upon the opposite one, and into its mouth, must have afforded a pleasant warmth to the basking philosopher, and will explain that immortal sentence of his in reply to Alexander the Great,—that essence of self-respect which will fitly open our Essay.

As we may be sure Diogenes would not go to see Alexander, that great conqueror (and conquerors were then much greater men than now, our philosophy placing them at a very low figure,) went to see him, surrounded by a glittering *corps* of courtiers, generals with short flat clanking swords that struck against their mailed buskins with a pleasant rattle, while figures of Pallas and her owl

adorned their helmets, from which streamed the blood-red plumes, dreadful to the eyes of maidens, and to babes, as we know from Homer's well-known verses. We can fancy the noise and swagger of this Grecian hero, and the little philosopher with bare shoulders peeping from his ragged cloak as he looked out of his oil-cask and watched the glittering train approach; and we can almost see the monarch stand before the tub, as well as hear the sounding Greek of the question, 'What can Alexander of Macedon do for Diogenes?' The reply was, 'Get out of my sunshine!'

How thoroughly answered must the conqueror have been! How dumb-foundered must his courtiers have felt! There was really nothing else for the poor man to do but to mouth that silly attempt at a *quid pro quo*—'If I were not Alexander, I would be Diogenes.' Diogenes had shown that he was greater than Alexander, and remained in his tub master of the situation. We have in Winckelmann's engraved gems one from the antique of Diogenes leaning out of this vast pipkin as we have described it; and what gives the gem a great feature of truth is the fact that the jar is useless as a jar, having a large crack in its side, which has been fruitlessly mended by dovetails of lead; but finding that the oil or wine still exuded, the merchants have thrown it away, and Diogenes, obliged to no one, puts it to its world-renowned use.

Diogenes is an extreme instance of the weight of self-respect. He had reduced himself to first principles; he was nothing but skin, flesh, muscles and bone, for he would have gone without clothes had the Athenians permitted him; but he was Diogenes. He had no money wherewith to bribe any judge; no great train of attendants; no rich clothing; not a shred of gold as an ornament; no furniture. He had one cracked wooden bowl, from which he drank; but seeing a boy drink out of his hollowed hand, he threw his bowl away. How many of the rich citizens of Athens would have given half their fortunes for permission to feast Alexander! But that conqueror did not come to see them; they did not respect themselves, for they had degraded their lives with useless labour and selfish care; they were to be loved for their possessions, their feasts; but Diogenes was respected for himself.

We would not hold the cynic up as an example to be followed. The time for such extreme and feverish hatred of mankind, as is exemplified in Shakspere's 'Timon of Athens,' is gone by. Although almost all great men have found the world 'but as the world,' a place of trial, in which Summer friends follow Summer fortunes, and the chilling Winter of disrespect accompanies poverty and fallen greatness; although History attests that kings have died solitary, and that great ministers, when they have fallen, have had hardly one of all those whom they

have loaded with favours to attend them, yet the wise man will endeavour to love those whom he finds so fragile, fickle, and false.

People who rail against the world do neither it nor themselves good. The satirist is hated, though he speaks the truth; the solitary is disliked—

> I was a stricken deer, which left the herd,

says the poet; but when he left the herd, the herd deserted him, and left him to lonely madness; and if Lord Byron has attested on the tombstone of a dog, that the faithful animal was in his opinion a nobler animal than Man, and worthier of friendship, Man has had his revenge on the noble poet, who died self-banished from the society he scorned.

The wisest way in the conduct of life is to know what Man is, and to endeavour to improve ourselves by the lesson. That is the shortest way to attain self-culture; for culture does not consist in learning several languages, nor in knowing how to order a dinner, or clearly to express our hopes, fears, and prayers, in various tongues —there are many tongues on earth, but only one in Heaven, as the epigraph upon Messrs. Bagster's admirable editions of the Scriptures tells us—nor in being able to solve an equation, or calculate an eclipse; but it does consist in having so instructed the soul that it shall be gentle in demeanour, affectionate but bold, ready to

bear success or non-success, and to walk this stage of life with proper and decent composure, exhibiting due love and respect for the good and the true, and no excessive amount of scorn for the base. This is a very hard lesson either for a man or a nation. For the young, who, as a rule, have a strong natural impulse for what is good, it is very difficult indeed not to despise the foolish and the wrong. For the strong in moral force, it is again more difficult not to despise the weak and tortuous. For the humorous and satirical (and young people have almost always an abundant supply of good humour and sound satire) it is most difficult of all not to indulge in funny hits, and sneers, and savage satire. Let us take two great satirists, Swift and Pope, the first a much bolder and nobler spirit than the second; it is difficult to conceive a more unhappy life than that which Swift spent; it is difficult to find any works more full than Swift's of biting hits, sly innuendoes, satiric praise, and savage satire; and this humour culminated in that popular work, 'Gulliver's Travels,' wherein he makes horses nobler than men, paints women as lascivious apes, and causes his hero to retire to his stable, having learnt the language of horses, to enjoy a respite from the baseness which surrounded him. But does such satire do good? When they buried this great man (for we hold that he was a great and a good man, and of an exceedingly tender heart), they said of him in his epitaph that they had laid

him where cruel indignation (*sæva indignatio*) could never vex him more. Were men more base in his time than in Shakspere's? Hardly so; and yet we find in the greater poet and wiser intellect much more genial excuse for the follies and wickedness of man, and even a love for the erring brothers and sisters who drew their breath upon the same planet, and were surrounded by the same temptations and follies as himself. As for Pope, it is unfortunately the truth that every new life of that philosophical and admirable poet reveals a greater amount of the very cunning he despised, and the baseness he satirized. And if these great men cannot escape the common weakness of humanity, how shall the ordinary type of mankind escape? Self-culture will teach him his own weakness; and a knowledge of that should teach him kindness; which, after all, pays best, and is a proof of the greatest wisdom.

From self-culture, by which a man (and of course we here include the other sex, and if you like it the nobler though they are 'much of a muchness') will learn his weaknesses as well as his better qualities, he will also learn self-restraint. It is well to know just what we can do well, and what we cannot do; what we can bear, and where we must forbear; where we are strong, and where we are weak. A very weak man may appear a strong one if he is only tried upon his good points. As Juvenal, *Sat.* x. 365, says, with a sneer at Fortune—

Nullum numen habes, si sit prudentia: sed te
Nos facimus, Fortuna, Deam, cœloque locamus.

'Even Fortune is no goddess if a man be only prudent; for, after all, it is we who make Fortune a goddess and place her in Heaven.' That is, it is to our weakness that our belief in luck is due, and that proper prudence will supply it. So we may say that a man should never want prudence if he attains self-restraint, based upon self-knowledge.

Half the nostrums of the world, which wise men, or those who deem themselves wise, put forward to cure the evils of society, will be put out of course by self-restraint. No one except the most ardent teetotallers would argue that it is a sin to taste wine. The sin consists in the excess, and although vegetarians have a much better cause, for on the face of the question it seems cruel to kill animals to feed on them, perhaps they might listen to reason where moderation is exercised. Self-restraint will make every kind of enjoyment lawful in its proper time and place, will induce good health and satisfaction in life; will make our work a pleasure, our exercise delightful, our rest and sleep refreshing. In these, also, we should be careful and moderate. In fact there is nothing in life that can be indulged in to excess without hurt to soul and body. In like manner there is hardly anything in life that need be shunned as a sin or a folly if taken properly—used and not abused.

From self-culture and self-restraint springs self-respect. To attain this we must be moderate in work as well as in enjoyment ; and this moderation in work—and in grasping the results of work, pay, place, or honour—one of the purest and best writers of this age, Professor Ruskin, has been usefully prominent in recommending. Man's life should be beautiful and free. He has no right to degrade himself to the level of a machine, and for the bare sake of living to waste and throw away all that makes life worth having. Can we expect the young to honour the old, or to respect the mystery of life itself, if all that is presented to them in the life-time of their elders be one dull round of work, business, dining, and sleeping? Is life worth having at the price of a constant dull struggle with sordid matters, with buying and selling, with attempted advancement by getting over the heads of others, without the relief of one noble or generous action or one wide-minded sentiment? Life was not given to be spent in a round of pleasure ; but some pleasure, and of the higher sort, every life should have. Parents, teachers, and thinkers should look to this. The wild reaction of youth, yes, and of age too, against the dull, cold religion, the sordid gains and continual work around them, is a protest not to be disregarded. What wonder is it that we are called shopkeepers, 'a nation of shopkeepers,' buyers and sellers, and Philistines, if all we think of is mere shopkeeping?

We do not say that every one of us is so given, but by far the larger part of this nation is. The legislature seems incapable of taking large, wise, and far-off views. It is content to legislate merely for the present; it is intent upon saving a few pounds in its executive, while it lets its army, its militia, and its general defences remain upon a basis which is ridiculous for its insecurity. It allows some of the best workmen in the world either to stand idle or to emigrate in discontent, and then wonders that other countries do not respect us. Great Britain must first respect herself. Her history is glorious, her capacity enormous, her industry prodigious; and yet Prussia has just told us in so many words that she will take the lead, and cry, as Paracelsus, the German quack physician, cried to the ancients, 'Get thee behind me, England, France, Spain, and Italy, for I am the true leader of the world.' It is clear that Germany does not lack self-respect.

And with men and with nations this feeling is the one great desideratum. A man must respect himself to be of weight in life. Modesty and retirement are admirable virtues, but they are not at all inconsistent with the fact of a man's knowing that he has done his best; that he has been thoroughly honest, that he has used, and to the best advantage, the talent that God has given him. Self-respect will be the result of self-culture and self-restraint, and the last will become more and more easy every time it

is practised. It is well for a man in reading, sleeping, walking, eating, and drinking, sometimes to limit himself, sometimes to indulge ; to take care that he at no time becomes a slave to one passion, or to one habit, by rigorously repressing any, even the slightest indication that way. If he is fond of wine, let him abandon it for a month or so ; if his pipe becomes an indulgence, let him throw it away ; if he finds an increasing love of rest and sitting, let him rise and walk. It is no merit in him to be a hard drinker, or a continual smoker, or to sleep after dinner ; but it is a merit to keep the animal within him under control. A railway driver, who found that he could not stop nor stay his engine, nor reverse its action when he wanted, would soon find out the reason, and go to the engineer and have the matter looked to. When our habits are our slaves we can respect ourselves ; when we are slaves to our habits no one will respect us. In this category of habits let us place indulgence in certain feelings and actions. It will be as well at times rigidly to control the tongue, to determine, let us say for a whole day, to say no more of Jones than we actually know, and to say that good-naturedly ; to bridle and manage the thoughts, so as easily to banish evil thoughts, ill-nature, despondency, doubt, &c., and to correct want of charity and kindliness by forcing ourselves to be charitable and kind. What a mean opinion must a man have of himself if he has to confess, 'Well, I cannot be truthful, nor good-natured,

nor honest, if I try! My tongue always runs away with me: I never speak well of anybody; I do not do any good; I have left no kindly remembrance in the hearts of any one.' This must indeed be a terrible confession. In Richard Rolle's 'Pricke of Conscience,' written about 1340, the good monk, surnamed the Hermit of Hampole, thus pictures the end of man's life:

> The last ende of man's life es hard,
> That es, when he drawes to ded-ward;
> For when he es seke, and bedreden lys,
> And sore feble that he may noght rys,
> Than er men in dout and noght certayn
> Wether he shall ever cover agayn;

begin, in fact, as we do now, to reckon up 'the poor dying man'; but, at the same time, the conscience within is at the same work, and its deadliest 'pricke' must be that which condemns a man's self; for it is the very pivot and centre of Christian faith that a man shall pronounce his own doom, and so 'accusing and excusing' himself, may know how his account lies. Unable as he is of himself to boast of any merit, he will know whether he has done his best, and whether he can claim that guerdon which will be based on self-respect.

CHAPTER VII.

A WORKING MAN'S PARLIAMENT.

CHAPTER VII.

Why Justice is blind—British Elections—Too much Talk—Right will conquer—Advice of Mr. Ruskin—Nobility of Labour—Delight in Work—Future of England—The Rights of Man—Few real Wants—Money and its Worth.

'BEFORE the awe-full throne of Zeus,' said Hesiod, 'Diké stands and weeps whenever the earthly judge decides wrongly;' that is, to translate the passage from Grecian into English nomenclature, Justice, standing before the throne of God, laments at the wickedness, prejudice, or discord of human judgments. 'No wonder, then,' adds a caustic clergyman, remembering the judgments of county magistrates, 'that our modern sculptors represent Justice on town halls with a bandage on her eyes: she has seen so much injustice that she has gone weeping blind.'

Diké, or Justice, must weep very often at a British election. She must have wept when she heard the nonsensical harangues of one or the other party, the appeals to the passions of the audience or mob, the misrepresentations, the false assertions, the folly of both. We English live in a kindly way in general; but here were gentlemen assuring their respective parties that the other parties were complete ogres. Of the one hand, the Conservatives were represented as 'preying on the vitals of the land,' 'living on the blood and flesh of the poor man;' and on the other, the Liberals were said to be desirous of pulling down the Church and the Throne, and were 'Jesuits in disguise,' who wished 'to shut up the Bible, and to banish religion from the land.' These are not fanciful but real assertions; there was on the whole too much talk about the matter. Mr. Gladstone spoke something like forty thousand words, that were reported by telegraph; Mr. Bright nearly as many. We do not say that either of these eminent men used the phrases quoted, but we do say that they used too many words. 'Beware of the man of words' is a Biblical proverb. 'Do you call that poatry,' Thackeray makes Jeames say, 'in your sea capting, with his eternal slack-jaw?'—'I am sure that barrister is not speaking the truth; he has got the losing side, he uses too many words,' said a simple juryman. In the multitude of counsellors there may be wisdom, but in the vast torrent of eloquent outpourings there is sure

to be folly; and it is a fact that, exceptions being excepted, the most voluble of nations are the most foolish, the most eloquent of men have the least sense. There is no proof that a man who can talk a horse's hind leg off will make a good statesman. Deeds, not words, are what Englishmen were wont to demand.

The result of all this talk was shameful. It embittered man against man, party against party. Two delegates to Parliament, one the son of an earl, called each other respectively a sneak, a liar, a cur, and so on. In Ireland more than one man was shot, and voters had to exercise their right protected by soldiers and armed policeman. When some men went to vote, a mob came and carried them away. In short, such things were done in the British Isles as should cause us to hang our heads for shame. How can clear and solid judgment proceed from such delegated men? Have we the best men? has the appeal to the country produced any real working man candidate? Do not all good and wise people see the necessity of having working men in our National Assembly? and yet was not almost every election greatly biased, if not determined, by the quantity of money spent? A plague on both parties or on all parties—upon the whole spirit of party—if such is to be the result!

Of course, there is no one who has a belief in God and in right but knows that in the end right will conquer. We shall have a noble outcome in the far-distant future

from all this turmoil; but it is yet too early to ask women to vote. We must do away with open voting, and substitute voting papers (as they have done for the graduates of Oxford or Cambridge) before that day comes; and meanwhile we must go on educating the people, and endeavouring not only to raise every man and woman, but every child. We can at least educate them in silence and in patience; as we are now, almost every one, without a thought wasted or spent about a matter, pronounced on it. Power is like fortune: all persons desire it, without knowing what to do with it; whereas, both fortune and power are sacred things, which involve a man in responsible duties, from which he can by no manner of means escape or get free.

We are here tempted to quote some of the noble sentences of John Ruskin, in his 'Letters to a Working Man' (Mr. John Dixon, of Sunderland), which he quotes from his speech at the Working Men's College. The gist of his words is, before you get into Parliament, just know what you will get there for. 'Do you think,' he asks, 'it is only under the lacquered splendours of Westminster, you working men of England, that your affairs can be rationally talked over? You have perfect liberty and power to talk over and establish for yourselves whatever laws you please, so long as you do not interfere with other people's liberties or properties. *Elect a parliament of your own.* Choose the best men among you, the best

at least you can find. Invite trustworthy persons of other classes to join your councils ; appoint time and place for its stated sittings ; and let this Parliament, chosen after your own hearts, deliberate upon the possible modes of the regulation of industry and advisablest schemes for the helpful discipline of life ; and so lay before you the best laws they can devise, which such of you as were wise might submit to, and teach their children to obey. And if any of the laws thus determined seem to be inconsistent with the present circumstances or customs of trade, do not make a noise about them, nor try to enforce them suddenly on others, nor embroider them on flags, nor call meetings in the Park about them in spite of railings and police ; but keep them in your thoughts and sight, as objects of patient purpose and future achievement by peaceful strength.'

Now this advice ought to be taken, and no doubt it will be. Any aid that we can personally give to it we will, for we love and honour the true worker, being, we hope, ourselves of that class, and we feel bound to aid him in this his day of defeat; for the working man has received a heavy blow and sore discouragement at the hands of all Britain. Not a working candidate succeeded : it was, perhaps, best that he should not, for, perhaps with one exception, there was not one fit representative : and the middle classes have been disgusted with such men as Finlen and Bradlaugh, who put themselves prominently

forward as ideal working men. No class has been more disgusted and hurt, as we well know, than the workers themselves; therefore now is the time for their true friends to show them all sympathy and respect. While their delegates were making out that they were masters of the situation, and were so ridiculously upstart and 'peacocky,' we felt it not right to speak to them, nor to cross them, having been sufficiently misunderstood. But now is the time; and of a truth the future of England does depend upon the working man and his well-being. He did not by any means build, plan, and invent everything, but he did and does support everything. It is his industry that feeds us all. If we by far-reaching commerce feed him, we rely upon his work to repay that commerce. And it is the duty of every influential writer to keep alive a spirit of loyal self-respect and independence, of sweetness and light, of nobility and grace, of emulation and ambition, in the working man and in his family; and this we have humbly endeavoured to do, not, however, without some doubt and hesitation, for many a long year. He must therefore not be discouraged, and certainly not angered, by a temporary defeat. His time is coming, nay, now is, for it is always a good time for the active and the energetic worker. Many men are his friends; all parties court him; and truly he has the power in his hands, did he but know how to use it wisely.

He must begin by recognising, as poets have done, in

eloquent prose or in rhyming cadences, the nobility of labour. Some writers believe that only one kind of labour is noble, and that other occupations are servile. It would be more true to say that some occupations are nobler in their aim than others; but all work that tends to the comfort, help, clothing, sustenance, or elevation of our brothers is noble.

> Ay, labour is a noble thing,
> To work from morn till eve,
> To bend down o'er your shuttle,
> That your little ones may live.

All such labour is noble. So, too, packing parcels, or weighing sugar, wherein a constant justice and truth is demanded, is noble, if rightly exercised. As for tailoring and shoemaking, these trades approach the arts. Let any man wear for a day or so an ill-made coat, or a pair of ill-made boots, and then ask himself whether he does not appreciate the true workman. House-building, boat and ship-building, lock-making, carpenters' and joiners' work, and such like, have long been recognised as something elevated. No man is ashamed of being a good carpenter or smith; and there is an immense deal of pleasure in looking at and examining a deft workman handling his tools well, and producing good work. The pleasure he receives is great and very pure. 'Give me the man who sings at his work,' exclaims a wise writer. Ay, because the man who sings and takes delight in his

work is a good workman, and if fairly rewarded, and of a prayerful, contented mind, is perhaps one of the happiest men in existence. The simplest work, honestly done, yields an immediate reward. Notice, you who live in the country, the satisfaction given to the ploughman by a straightly ploughed furrow; or that the labouring gardener has, not alone when his cloves and carnations in crimson fulness delight the eye with their colour, and load the morning air with their scent, but when he has trenched up the celery, or dug up the potato patch as it should be dug, and made the rich loam spread its brown and fertile surface to the sun.

To give the workman his due, he feels all this; being a sound, good man he must experience joy in work; his only two troubles are that he gets, on the whole, too much work and too little pay. That is a very general complaint with us all: it is Adam's heritage and Eve's curse. We accept, and wisely, the necessity of work, without which this beautiful earth would itself be barren; but we moan and complain, not without fierce heart-burnings, and sometimes much bloodshed, because the rewards of this world are so unjustly distributed. Ah, good friends, there is the trouble! 'Fortune gives too much to many, but enough to none,' says the proverb; and probably no man, however rich, thinks he is adequately rewarded. But remember, the labourer is worthy of his hire; he who withholds that proper hire from him

is accursed; and in spite of the laws of supply and demand, and such perilous stuff, talked by political economists, who, for the most part, have been materialists, and have had not the fear of God, nor the study of His laws before their eyes, we can easily see what the labourer's hire is. For giving to the world his assistance, honestly, in the lowest form of labour, he is entitled to demand healthy life, room to breathe, enough to eat, enough for his wife and children, and sufficient joy, relaxation, and play, to keep him in proper health. For the better and more healthful the man, the more true labour the world gets from him; and the better the labour, the more the world is benefited. It is plain that when a man in the highest class of labour writes a scientific treatise or a moral essay, he should bring his best learning and holiest thought to that purpose; and the better the learning, the more holy the thought, the more the world benefits thereby. In certain labour, goodness, soundness, and honesty of work are a *sine quâ non*, a condition which must be. The pin of the railway or carriage wheel must be of the best, or it breaks suddenly and causes death; the chain-cable of the anchor, the anchor itself, must be good. You may mingle sawdust with spice, and cast and sell wooden nutmegs without loss of life; but if you sell a sham ginger-bread anchor, and a ship is lost, you are a murderer. Now, in the Crimean War, the firms who supplied the soldiers sent

out putrid meat in patent (?) tins, and mouldy hay, with, in one case, a putrid lamb in a truss; horses were starved by the hundred, and men died by the score. There was a cry, 'Whom shall we hang?' But none of those traders, around whose neck we would have put a rope with zeal, knowing that the nation thereby would have been taught the wisest lesson, were brought to justice.

It is the dishonest greed for great gains, the dishonourable competition amongst firms, which no co-operation will do away with, that produces short weight, rotten tins, bad junk, old ships made to go down, and so forth; it is this that the workers must co-operate against in their Parliament. If it were allowable, and the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals would not interfere, it would be well if every baker who (purposely) gave short weight, or adulterated bread, had his ear nailed to his door-post. This dishonesty, this 'theft by false work,' as Mr. Ruskin calls it, is the most deadly to us all that can be. It cuts into the very vitals of the poor; it gives bad beer and stimulants that madden and make drunk the worker; it gives bad sour bread that does not nourish him, shoes that cripple and make him worse than barefoot, clothes that do not warm him. 'If you steal a hundred pounds of plate, like a brave burglar,' says Mr. Ruskin, 'a man knows his loss; besides that, you take your risk of punishment like a man. And if you do it bravely and openly, and habitually live by such inroad,

you may retain nearly every moral and manly virtue, and become a heroic rider, driver, and hero of song; but if you swindle me out of twenty shillings in each hundred bargains, I lose my hundred pounds just the same; I get a hundred untrustworthy articles besides; . . . and you, having done your thieving basely, are corrupted by the guilt of it to the very heart's core.'

And what do you gain by this frightful dishonesty Money. A large firm of linendrapers, which has eaten up little firms, began in a large way, sold very cheap, and failed. Its creditors bore the brunt; it began again, sold more cheaply, and failed again. Again the creditors suffered. It set up a third time, and then—having so dearly purchased a reputation for selling cheaply—made a huge fortune. Thy money perish with thee! All the money that it has made will never buy back the disappointed hopes of creditors and workpeople. The distrust of those who lost, of those who honestly opposed it, and who were dishonestly beaten out of the market, the hatred engendered, the want of faith in Providence taught by the success of these rogues—are these nothing? And what is gold worth? 'Man wants but little here below,' if he knew it; and if he practised that which he knew, still less. Two great evils threaten the workers, hunger and cold. Those staved off, he needs little; and gold purchases very little worth having. 'Time is money, say your wealthy economists and practical merchants,'

cries Mr. Ruskin, in a bitter and solemn sermon. 'None of them, however, I fancy, as they draw towards death, find that the reverse is true, and that money is time. But other things are money: health is money, wit is money, knowledge is money; and all your health, and wit, and knowledge may be changed for gold, and the happy goal so reached of a sick, insane, and blind auriferous old age; but the gold cannot be changed, in its turn, into health and wit.'

It is worth little then; it is never worth dishonest getting or disquieting oneself in vain for. There is arising in the midst of us a proposition for clipping the vast overgrown estates and of using the money for educational purposes. Some very serious questions have been debated by working men, and will again arise; no one can blink them or pass them by.

CHAPTER VIII.

GOOD OUT OF EVIL.

CHAPTER VIII.

Voltaire—Mandeville's 'Fable of the Bees'—The Lisbon Earthquake—Poisonous Remedies—Voltaire's Head and Heart—Accidents not all Evil—Fate and Jupiter—Isaac Barrow—None without Trials.

WE have been, perhaps unhappily, born in a time when evil is openly acknowledged as a tremendous power, which it is; and also followed as an end, which it is not and never can be. Evil must be conquered, crushed, and supplanted by good. This is the victory of life over death; this takes the sting from the grave. But in this fervent, hasty, and too often unreflecting age there are those, as we shall prove by quotation, who worship evil for itself. The grandest and purest poet that England or the world ever produced, John Milton, with a retrospective prescience, if we may use that phrase, makes Satan exclaim,

'Evil, be thou my good;' and great writers who come after him, notably Voltaire, seem to us to adopt that awful creed. He does it with his usual cunning, and takes care to put his reasons in the lips of another. He is writing of 'bees'—a perfectly harmless subject one would think—quoting Mandeville's 'Fable of the Bees, or Public Vices, Private Benefits;' and thus he introduces the poison in the tail of his article, as the sting is in the tail of a bee:

'Mandeville,' he says, 'goes a great way; he pretends that bees could not live together in comfort, in a great and powerful hive, without many vices. No kingdom, no state, he says, can flourish without vices. Take away vanity from your great and rich ladies and you destroy your manufactures in silk; no more workmen and workwomen of a thousand different kinds!—a great part of the nation would be brought down to beggary. Deprive your merchants of avarice, and the English fleets will disappear from the sea; take away envy from your artists and emulation will cease: we should fall back into ignorance and the grossness of barbarism.'

This is so very specious—being, indeed, an expansion of Rochefoucault's maxim that all our vices are disguised virtues, and all our virtues vices in disguise—that a little further on Voltaire apologises for Mandeville, and adds: 'This is as much as to say that even our crimes are useful, in that they serve to establish a good government. A highwayman makes him who betrays him gain a good

deal of money; nay, he benefits those who arrest him, the gaoler who guards him, the judge who condemns him, and the hangman who executes him. In fact, if we had no robbers, the men who forge fetters would die of hunger.' Yes, so they would; only chains are found very useful for other matters than chaining prison doors or putting on men's legs. The man who forges an anchor and the smith who makes a cable are doing noble work. It is mere specious talk to say that one must live by vice. As Voltaire himself says, 'We make very good medicinal remedies from poisons; but poisons are not exactly those things which nourish life (*qui nous font vivre*).'

In thinking over this very difficult subject, we must bear in mind that Voltaire, a tender-hearted and, upon the whole, a just man, certainly a great one, never survived the shock received from the earthquake of Lisbon, in which so many thousand persons were hurried out of this life into, as we hope, a better. If we knew as certainly as we know a mathematical problem, or the result of a sum in arithmetic, that the persons (many pious Roman Catholics) really benefited by their deaths, there would remain a ready solution of the question; but Voltaire, who had a very tender heart, had also a sceptical and incredulous head. He did not think sufficiently well of humanity to suppose that so many thousands would be admitted *en masse* into heaven; and the

poverty, sickness, and plague that sprung up on the fall of Lisbon, the starving and crippled wretches that were buried in its ruins, the starvation which fell among its survivors, haunted him with a real pity and an indescribable terror. He had not that philosophy which faith can give. He was a man as well formed to believe that 'somehow good will be the final end of ill' as any one; but the wretchedness of France, the misery of the poor, the callousness of the rich, the terrible vices, hard-heartedness, and folly of the Roman clergy, of whom Voltaire himself was one, made him ignore Christianity, and he was without hope as to a blessed future. When he writes of the soul, he doubts it—'You might as well talk of the soul of a vegetable.' He sneers; and therefore, without compensation, the whole scheme of man, as far as he saw it, was a painful trial, a real tragedy, or a miserable farce; the only way of passing through which was to 'grin' in the Voltairean way, and 'bear it.'

When man is looked upon in this sort of way, the prospect is miserable enough. If we shut our eyes, depend upon it we shall always be in the dark. The pious Greeks found life very hard to bear; and having invented a god to whom to cry—'If there were no god,' said Robespierre, quoting Voltaire, 'a good government would invent one'—they yet found that there were things at once so terrible and so mysterious that they could not reconcile them with the easy manly good-nature with

which they had endowed the cloud-compelling and thundering Zeus or Jupiter. 'Tis true he wielded the thunder and the lightning; but the thunder often came at the wrong time, and the lightning too often struck the wrong man. To solve this difficulty, the ancients made Fate superior to Jupiter; and Fate was a dreadful thing, to which gods and men equally submitted. Unless this fact is borne in mind it is impossible to appreciate the deep melancholy of the Greek tragedians. Orestes, knowing that his mother has slain his father, in obedience to Apollo slays his wicked mother, but is, nevertheless, haunted by Furies:

> * * * My dark-soul'd mother,
> With wily art, in private murder'd him;
> The bloody bath attested her foul deed!
> I, then an exile, bending back my steps,
> Slew her that gave me birth: nor shall my tongue
> Deny the deed; it was a vengeance due
> To my loved father's shade: so Phœbus deem'd,
> Who urged me, and denounced heart-rending woes
> Should I shrink back, refusing to avenge.

Here, then, is a pretty dead-lock. If Orestes had not slain Clytemnestra—who, by the way, slew her husband for sacrificing their daughter Iphigenia to the gods, as commanded by the priests—Apollo would have punished him. As he did so, the Furies haunted him and drove him to madness. There could be no comfort nor hope in such a religion as this; on either hand was trouble.

Evil seemed to predominate; the only outcome was a placid stoicism, which suffered without complaining, or a vulgar epicureanism, which enjoyed while it had life, and let the future, with its mournful terrors, take its chance.

True philosophy has taught us to try to understand the ways of the Almighty, and to distinguish between good and evil. It is the first duty of the wise man, always the duty of every man, to do this:

> Awake, my St. John! Leave all meaner things
> To low ambition and the pride of kings.
> Let us (since life can little more supply
> Than just to look about us, and to die)
> Expatiate free o'er all this scene of Man—
> A mighty maze! but not without a plan.

So sings Pope to his patron and his inspirer; and it is just because it is 'not without a plan,' that we, who do comprehend the whole plan, are so cast down with evil. The great and wise Isaac Barrow has a good simile when he compares the ocean to God. Who can comprehend Him, yet, who being wise, would deny Him? Simple, consistent, immutable, and illimitable, He is still before us, vast and incomprehensible. 'But,' asks Barrow, 'is the ocean less visible, because standing upon its shore we cannot descry its utmost limits?' And again: 'The more unlimited things are, the more correspondent they are to our limited faculties, *no finite being being able to satisfy his large capacities.*'

But these large capacities for good meet with cruel rebuffs when they seek to be completely satisfied. The good man who has expanded and become as an angel, loving his kind, is perplexed with constant evil. It rises with him in the morning; it haunts his bed at night. He sees the saint led to the stake, and the villain promoted to office; he finds the mean and the narrow successful, and the open-handed and generous in want—

> Right for ever on the scaffold; wrong for ever on the throne.

To him it is so easy and so pleasant to be good, that he wonders at the stupidity of the world. When at last he better understands the whole, he may happily distinguish; but at present he is perplexed. Whether it be in St. François de Sales, or in à Kempis, or in John Wesley, the cry is the same, 'Why doth the wicked prosper?'

It may, however, comfort us to reflect that all evils are not the same. A wise worldly man once told us that he had reduced all evils to two—hunger and cold. Let a man be well fed and warm, said this modern Epicurean, all things—shame, distress, anguish—may be borne, and borne easily. In his sense he is right. The evils of the world are to be divided; many of them are trials, others simple evils, working out their way accursed, punishing and destroying as they go.

The evils, commonly called evils, but merely trials, are poverty, shame, want of success, wars, tumults, famine,

tempests, shipwrecks, blights, volcanoes, earthquakes, frosts, rebellions, revolutions, and generally those operations of Nature which legal language defines to be the act of God. As for accidents resulting from man's carelessness or laziness, we should not look upon them as evils. They are reminders, more or less gentle, of our own follies, and they carry their lessons with them. One of these seldom happens without causing the avoidance of others. 'The scalded cat,' says the French proverb, 'dreads cold water.' If so, we may be sure that it is a good thing for the cat. Poverty, which is, and will always be, the great trial of the earth, is demonstrably a blessing in disguise. That the poorest lands, within reason, are best cultivated—that their people are the most energetic—that riches corrupt, and ease causes a nation to degenerate, are axioms so true that they become truisms. So with riches. A rich man without trials, troubles, and duties, is contemptible; he is lower than a man. Luckily, we have very few of such men; but still we have enough to prove our rule. 'If you want to know,' says Swift, in one of the truest and the bitterest things ever said, 'what God All-mighty thinks of riches, just look upon those upon whom He has bestowed most of them.' As for wars undertaken by the inquietude of the people; wars which change the face of countries and give the lands of one monarch to another—which desolate and slay, kill, maim, and torture—it is an astonishing

thing to reckon up what we owe to them. The pain of them is transient, and hurts but momentarily a generation; the benefit remains for years. Tumults and revolutions, rebellions and political commotions, hurt as they pass over us, but benefit us when they are gone. Why they should be at all, it is idle to ask. Man is certainly not in a world of passive enjoyment; and Revelation cannot be accused of ever deceiving man on that score. He is told that he is not to lay up his treasure on earth, 'where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal.' He is reminded that his life here is but a shadow. If governors will be corrupt, stupid and bad, the people will rebel. We have long gone beyond the belief in 'the right divine of kings to govern wrong.' It would seem that, with the British especially, nothing were so easy as to govern well: to seek the people's prosperity, to be surrounded by wise counsellors, to be active and energetic, is all we demand. Yet how many sovereigns have satisfied us in that way? To seek greatness by ambition, and to fall asleep in laziness and pleasure, seem to have been the two ends most sought after by our governors—notwithstanding some brilliant exceptions. And yet all our troubles have hitherto only made us better. Without brag or exaggeration, this corner of the earth, this knuckle end of Europe, has been for a long time the wonder and envy of the world.

Evils that are the act of God are becoming every day

far better understood, and change their faces so much that they are regarded as blessings. The frost that slays the uncared-for lamb upon the mountains, and smites the careless traveller on the lonely road, kills thousands of insects when their work is done, and renders the earth friable and fertile, so that man is blessed with abundance. The cold of Christmas acts with a sharp benevolence upon the energy of Spring, and the chemistry of Nature needs the rest and the pause. The tempest which tosses the fishing boat clears the air and purifies the town; the lightning which strikes the vessel has its mission of mercy, though it turned aside to kill. The earthquakes, so cruel in their results, are, we may depend, kind in their cruelty. As yet we see in part and know in part; we have penetrated but the crust of the earth; we know but little of its complicated machinery; but we are beginning to trace the belt of subterranean fires, which are perhaps as necessary to our existence as the air which we breathe, and they and the sun produce. It is irrelevant to ask, why should there not be unmixed good, happiness without alloy, youth without age, pleasure without pain, sunshine without storm, perpetual day without intervening night, and eternal life without the rest of death? To this question, irrelevant as well as irreverent there is but one answer: God willed it otherwise. This earth is not heaven. It is admirable as a place of trial; its very imperfections are admired, though admitted to be stings

and troubles. The modern philosopher, who the other day was insolent and irreverent enough to charge his Maker with being a bungling workman, because in His works there were variations, apparent (to us) in utilities and decay, is to be dismissed as being merely impertinent. Truly his charge is *impertinens*; it doth not belong to the question. The uses of sickness and of bodily pain will be admitted by all who know life, and have felt both health and sickness. To the wise man these 'evils' are but what the pious Catholics call them, 'exercises.'

They should exercise us for our good. In point of fact they do exercise all people for good. The best and kindest of us all, the most saint-like and the most fit to live with God—and we hope and trust that some have so fitted themselves—have borne pain, suffering, and sorrow, without repining.

But beyond this, there are evils that come to no good, and are purely wicked. We have grown to be so sugar-sweet in this day of small things that more than one poet has pitied the Devil and condoned his offences. In the second part of 'Faust,' Goethe hints at his final forgiveness; Burns groans over his fate; and Longfellow cries out—

> For even he—he is God's minister
> Existing for some good, by us not understood.

It may be so; we cannot debate the large question here;

but if he is not to be understood he is to be withstood, to be avoided, to be abhorred and utterly cast out; for cursed is he who worships evil for the pleasure it brings him, and who dares to say that it is good.

CHAPTER IX

ON CONFIDENCES AND SECRETS.

CHAPTER IX.

Secrets illusive—Midas has Ears!—Public Confessors—Plutarch's Morals—The Athenian Mercury—Confession—The common Character of Sin.

A SECRET is one of those things which ought to convince us of the illusiveness of life, and the emptiness of human affairs. It exists only in name; it is like echo, a sound, having no existence; it appears to live; nay, in its very death—that is, when it is told to a third party as a very *great* secret—it pretends to take a new lease of life. It is so evanescent, such a sham, that everybody tries to destroy it; try to clasp it, and you clasp a bubble; touch it, and it breaks. All experience, all life, all that we see and hear, confirms this. Talleyrand used to say that if a secret was known to more than two persons it never lasted three days, a fourth person was sure to

know it; and the story of Midas—which our admirable English author, Mr. Hales, whom the French call D'Héle, put into a charming opera, which yet keeps the French stage—is but the antique version of the fall of secrets.

In mythic ages, when the gods were supposed to visit the earth, Midas was king of a people of Thrace, and had so beautiful a garden that the god Silenus used to come down to it. Being made drunk by the strange expedient of pouring wine into a fountain, he revealed to Midas a secret concerning life. It is not of so refreshing a nature that we need publish it; nevertheless, we give it to our readers, since we, later livers in more golden days, with nobler lives before us, made holy by duty done, and beautiful from the sure hope of a blessed reward, can afford to laugh at it. This drunken Silenus told Midas, the king, the profound secret that 'life is most free from evil when we are ignorant of the future; that it would have been better for man not to have been born at all; nevertheless, being born, his greatest happiness is to die as soon as possible.' A cheerful secret that!—an outcome of faithless times, and much and far wandering from the true God. But Midas must have his secret, too. Having at a subsequent period well entertained Silenus, he obtained, through that god, from Bacchus his one sole wish—and that, of course, a foolish one—that all that he touched might turn to gold. Thoroughly was he cursed

by the fruition of this wish, for the very river he bathed in, the Pactolus, ran over golden sands, and his food turned to unnourishing lumps of yellow dross. Like the leper he cried out, and received an order from the god to wash away his fatal gift: hence those Pactolean sands, of which modern poets have made so much use.

Old fables (such as the above) are very beautiful, and have a mine of sweet wisdom in them when we 'observingly distil it out.' This same Midas, who must be meddling, distinguished himself afterwards by being the umpire in a musical contest between Pan, the god of rude nature, the shepherds, and the woods, and Apollo, the Sun-god, and especial god of Music. Of course the rude ears of this mortal Thracian king preferred the scrannel pipes of Pan, and his merry country airs, to the divine music of Apollo; and he declared that Pan was the victor; whereupon the wrathful Apollo turned the ears of King Midas into asses' ears—a fit revenge for so stupid a critic! But there are ways to hide even asses' ears, as our critics know, and King Midas concealed his from all but his personal attendant, who, bursting with the important secret, and not daring to tell it to any human being, dug a hole in the ground and whispered it therein; but from the earth, thus fertilised, there grew a crop of reeds, which nightly whispered to the Summer wind, 'Midas has asses' ears!' Such was the secret of Midas.

The fact is, there is no keeping a secret, even if it concerns oneself. There is a necessity for a confidant to whom we can confide something that lies close about our bosom. There are few persons in the world who are entitled to say this with more certainty than clergymen and clerical editors, to whom are entrusted every week secrets ordinary and extraordinary, from crimes of the deepest dye to little peccadilloes at which the purest innocence only is abashed. These confidences are made by people of all ranks, and from all the civilised parts of the globe, and from their number and nature never can be, and never are revealed. A line in print, an indication where to find consolation or succour, or in what way to retrace incautious steps, directed to simple initials or an assumed name, catches the eye of the confessor at breakfast, and may make the heart beat quicker; but no one else knows it, and no one can act upon the confession, while hundreds who intuitively read why the advice was given, can act upon the advice. Although these questions, confessions, and confidences are now confined to the cheap magazines, the number who take advantage of such—persons of fair education—is very large, and betokens a human want. Being human it is ancient. In Plutarch's *Moralia* questions are debated that are not settled yet, and if some of the confessions in Addison's 'Spectator' were manufactured, there can be little doubt that many, and those the most startling, were

true. As the 'Saturday Review' says, they cannot all have been invented.

It is more than 150 years since similar questions and answers were published under the direction of John Dunton, a somewhat eccentric bookseller, as the 'Athenian Mercury'* (republished in 1728 as the 'Athenian Oracle'), and in those answers may be observed matters touching religion and morals. But, as the Laureate tells us:

> No being on this earthly ball
> Is like another all in all:

so certainly no journal or periodical is the exact counterpart of another. Half of the successors of the 'Mercury' seem to have failed for want of earnestness, many from want of ability; others, with plenty of ability, from a notion that the proper way to amuse A, B, and C, was to make fun of D, E, and F, forgetting that one man's mind is very much a counterpart of another's. It is now found that, laying aside the petty temptation to laugh at the simplicity of some questions, the plain and best way is to answer all seriously. A wise answer may be given to a very foolish question. The heart recognises the sincerity of the head; and this is the secret of speaking to the heart.

The world cannot do without confession in some way.

* 'The Athenian Mercury, or a Scheme to Answer a Series of Questions Monthly, the Querist remaining Concealed.'

Cunning men have taken advantage of this, and added another link to the great long chain by which they bind men. Confession seems to some to imply absolution: it does no such thing. A true Christian, before he commits a crime, is already absolved; and God, who sees the fall, knows when to raise the weakling and to comfort him with hope. But without referring to the practice of private confession, as urged on the patient by some religions — a bad and misdirecting practice, we believe—we may urge that the confessional must have a very disheartening and bad effect upon the priest. Father Gavazzi once likened the bosom of the holy man, who sits in a little box, and puts his ear to the grated opening where the penitent kneels, to the Thames before its purification, which had all the pollutions and filth of the sewers poured into it. How could such a man believe in goodness? The demure maiden who knelt before him had to tell of some dreadful and secret sin; the pious father, of some unholy plot for pleasure or for gain; the chaste and excelling matron, beloved, admired, wondered at for her goodness, of some folly or some crime, we may well believe. It is wisely done in the Church of Rome that, for the most part, the priest and the penitent know little of each other, or else! —the prospect is not pleasant. Another reflection which somewhat comforts us is this: that the crimes of man are, like the keys in a piano, by no means infinite. You

can get certain tones out of them, and no more; you may have many deficiencies and multitudinous combinations. But, after all, few men are original in their vices. We envy, we hate, we backbite, we steal, we lust, we murder, and we combine these and their various modifications in many ways. One man is honourable, excellent, admirable, but for a besetting sin; in this sin he slips, then repents, and slips again and again. The confessors know all this. The very tone and tint of every sin is marked down in Peter Dens and Sanchez, and marked and priced in the confessional; for it yields a good revenue, as the Cenci said on one notable occasion.

In Protestant countries our confessors are our friends, our advisers, or, best of all, the Almighty, as the old anti-Roman set of verses, written long years ago, said:

> He's able to confess, and always willing;
> To Him will I confess—and save my shilling.

But there are very few people who do not seek some sympathising soul to pour into it their troubles, trials, follies, and virtues. The reason why lovers are so fond of each other's company is that they confess to each other, talk about themselves. Annie tells William what mamma and papa said about him, or someone else, or how someone blamed somebody, and how Annie thought differently. Then comes the feeling which is properly *simpatica*. William thinks as Annie thinks, and Annie

thinks as he thinks. Their very confessions are half praises of themselves: 'Do you know I'm such a passionate creature, but ——'; and then comes the sweeter confession, 'I'm very jealous of those I love; but then ——.' And as one thinks, so does the other; and quite right too. It is hard indeed in this hard world if two cannot be in perfect confidence; but it is doubtful whether many are really so. Does every lover know all that his mistress has done before he met her? Many lovers are like the roguish fellow in Boccaccio's story, who, after a life of debauchery, vowed that he would die in the odour of sanctity. He therefore sent for a simple monk, and confessed that he had committed the greatest crime in the world, that nothing could cleanse him, and he wept and howled pitiably. The good monk tried in vain to pacify him, and to make him particularise the crime, but in vain; half the monastery tried, but with as little success. At last, just before he died, he confessed to the bishop—no smaller priest would serve—that he had once, when a boy, disobeyed his mother, and as a grey-haired man he still repented it. 'Is this all?' cried the bishop. 'All!' gasped the penitent; 'is it not enough?' And after receiving the sacrament, he died. 'If this be all his sins,' said the simple priests, 'he was the finest saint in the world;' so they carried his body to the church, worked miracles at his tomb, and in due time had him canonised. Such is the Italian's wicked

story. How many of us confess to peccadilloes to escape the imputation of greater sins?

Lawyers, doctors, clergymen, servants, see a great deal of many households and hear a great many secrets; that is, they find that most of their patients are fallible, and that in many a family there is a Blue-beard cupboard, in which there is a skeleton. We are quite ready to confess that some of these skeletons are very small. A, who is a prosperous man, is terrified with the secret that some five-and-twenty years ago his wife and he were glad to let their first floor; Mrs. B is terrified because her maid may discover that she wears that useful article a false tooth; but D, and H, and K, have graver secrets; one's son has been dishonest, or one's father a fraudulent bankrupt, and so on. Now these are secrets which no one need proclaim on the house-top, but they are not such as to make us despair or be very unhappy. Whatever is out of our own power need not grieve us, the birth mark on the back of B's neck, or the mark of shame upon C's birth, Heaven knows, neither could help. If we could choose our birth there would be more noblemen born than peasants; but that happily is beyond our control: as they say in a quaint country phrase of a man with an ugly proboscis, 'He was not behind the door when noses were given away.' We can only treat persons thus afflicted with greater consideration; for themselves, their comfort must be that their secret shame is imaginary and

temporary. Any folly of our own, hours and money misspent, disgrace, debt, dishonour, we may well be ashamed of, but if we even let any such secret escape, it is a blessing to know that gossips hear and forget it. The wise man knows that everyone is fallible and that he himself might fall. The fool's opinion is worth little; his bolt is soon shot, and seldom hits the mark.

It is wise, where possible, to look a secret in the face, and to pluck the heart out of the mystery by having it out. Half the Court tattle and rare secrets of great people and fashionable life resolve themselves into ordinary follies and sins, and sometimes amount not even to so much. 'Secret Memoirs of Lady Dash, Bedchamber-Woman to Princess Blank' are advertised every ten years or so; and what balderdash they are! The biggest secret is like that great thing in the 'Vicar of Wakefield,' where one of the Court ladies assures the company that 'my lord duke cried out three times to his *valet de chambre*, "Jernigan, Jernigan, bring me my garters!"' The book is sold, and so are its readers. Wiser it is, rather than to build up a mystery, not to have any at all. Let everybody know what you give for your wine or your mutton, if you pay an honest price; let the world shout it out that your two o'clock meal—which, by the way, all great people take, and at the same hour—is a dinner, and not a lunch; let C know that your brougham is hired, or that you keep only one servant. Why not? C can know, if

he likes ; openness defeats the tittle-tattle of the street or village. 'What, Sydney, carrying a parcel !' cried Inquisitive to a good clergyman. 'Yes ; and there's a couple of rabbits in it, that I've bought for dinner. Can you sell me any onions ?' Alderman Flower heard so many people whisper about him that he had been a porter, that he put his porter's knot in a glass-case in his hall ! So our old knights, from whom we are so proud to descend, bore water-bougets, mill-rinds, combs with hair, golden pills, and other heraldic charges on their shields, to denote descent from the water-carrier, the miller, the barber, or the doctor. They were too wise to blink, or to try to hide the most honourable portion of their career, its rise and progress.

There are many events in life which people conceal, which grow into secrets which haunt and plague them through life ; but which yet are not secrets at all. In the first place they are known to a dozen people as well as to the chief actor in them, just as the most private matter of the Tichborne family was known to the groom or the governess ; and in the second, if they are unknown, they are natural weaknesses, about which there need be no concealment whatever. Thus many a family has all its life been troubled by a sham piece of guilt, a supposititious stain. Poor human nature, haunted not only by her real sins, follies, shames, and sorrows, but by the ghosts of these. As we have false pride, so we have false sorrows :

as we have matters we wisely conceal, so we often blush at and hide those which may truly do us honour.

For real secrets choose discreet confidants; for sins, some wise and pious minister, to whom such confession will not be strange, or some one to whose clear judgment your burden will yield. Children should be taught in such revelations, which are all too seldom made, to rely upon parents—married people upon each other. A fault confessed is one-half pardoned; and many a misery is healed when, with an honest determination to amend, we 'cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff' that preys upon the conscience.

CHAPTER X.

OF THE USE OF WORDS.

CHAPTER X.

Modern Fun—Quiet Writers—The Use of Superlatives—Quintilian — Cobbett — Simplicity — Comparison — Comic Singers—Unreality of the Stage—Bombast to be avoided.

HOW to speak well and to express oneself justly should be the concern of each of us, and of all as well as of each, although the nonsense which protrudes itself into our magazines under the name of light literature, wherein all the fun consists in bad spelling, or in exaggerated expression, would seem to be a standing denial of the existence, or at least the general existence, of the desire. It is a fact, however, that to a vast number of people the literature (?) provided by Mr. Barney Guffaw, Mr. Joe Grinnings, and the much more refined and humorous Mrs. Brown, is not considered entertaining, and that many gentlemen and ladies really derive more pleasure

from calm, quiet, and contemplative writing, which conveys the writer's thoughts for just so much as they are worth, and no more, than from the ecstatic ravings of the spasmodic or sensational school. With such calm readers and critics, any expression which oversteps the modesty of nature is, in an author, just as objectionable as ranting in an actor, or as the most strained and muscular drawing—wherein the biceps is as big as a French roll and the veins like whipcord—of a young and vigorous artist who has just commenced his not unamusing career.

While many scholarly people like scholarly writing, there is a majority which prefer high seasoning and literary dishes with a flavour. There are writers, too, who, like cooks, are certainly too free with the pepper-box. In their simplicity they call this vigour. Their heroes are very heroic, and their villains decidedly villainous; their foes are soundly belaboured, and their friends as warmly praised. They live as if Prince Rupert had never existed, and the mezzotinto, or the secret of giving a middle tint, were an unknown art; and, sometimes, in virulent abuse, they seem ready to empty the slang dictionary; while, at others, in a laudatory way, all the beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount are insufficient for the object of their adulation. Every man must have some favourite method of ruining himself; 'some men to business'—on the Stock Exchange, let us say—'some to pleasure take;' but most of our vigorous

and slashing young writers take to adjectives. They, wishing to 'pile up the agony,' become careless of their positives, regardless of their comparatives, and profuse—nay, reckless—of their superlatives. Now the adjective is a difficult part of speech. Sir John Stoddart, in his 'Universal Grammar,' calls it the *noun*-adjective; while Mr. Tooke places a large number of them among the participles, 'treating,' says a grammarian, 'all his predecesssors with contempt.' Sydney Smith told a story of a man who 'spoke disrespectfully of the equator.' So Horne Tooke seems to have horrified many grammarians by his curt treatment of adjectives. 'Pray, sir, take care of your adjectives,' said Dr. Johnson. 'Boy!' thundered old Bowyer, 'mind your degrees.' The advice should never be thrown away. Vossius objected to the positive degree, because, said he, 'the other degrees are equally positive, that is, *lay down* their respective signification.' 'Lastly,' says Stoddart, 'the word superlative is not well chosen, since it merely shows preference, or raising one thing above another; and in this sense the comparative is itself a superlative.' Quintilian calls the positive the absolute; others the simple. But enough has been said to show that adjectives, whether in a high or a low degree, are difficult words, and, therefore, to be used cautiously. They may not have the dangerous power of utterly confusing your reader, as an ill-used pronoun does, and of making him hesitate as to who is guilty or

who is innocent when one is narrating a crime; they do not confuse the number and person as does a verb if plural where it should be singular, or *vice versâ*; their misuse is not so glaring, and therefore it is more frequent and more dangerous. Hume says that 'the principles of the Reformation were *deeper* in the prince's mind than to be *easily eradicated*.' 'This is no comparison at all,' cried Cobbett, 'it is nonsense.'

It is hardly in the use of comparatives that we sin now. We often are silly enough in our positive degree; and, as Cobbett pointed out long ago, we say *very* right, *very* wrong, *prodigiously* honest, *extremely* just, or *awfully* comic!

We try to strengthen a simple word, and make nonsense of it. A man cannot be more just than just, or more honest than honest; but in endeavouring to convey more than we really mean, we shoot beyond the mark. There has grown up with us of late a greediness for big words—a love of vastness and exaggeration. We have big houses, big ships, big firms, vast cataracts, and wonderful things of all kinds. An American, to whom the atmosphere of vastness had become a necessity, once astonished his audience by declaring that he could jump higher, squat lower, dive deeper, and come out drier, than anyone else. In fact, he was not to be exceeded. Such wild expressions encourage the young in the tendency, which exists in all fresh minds, towards habitual

untruth. One step over the boundary is dangerous; yet readers of fine writers are continually urged to take that step. Shakspere, when Hamlet's mind seems to be for the moment failing, makes him rave about heaping 'Pelion on Ossa,' and scorching the mountain's head against the sun; when, however, Hamlet is sane his words are calmer, he calls himself 'a *very* slave.' This does not suffice our lady writers; they fly to superlatives. 'He grew,' one tells us, 'the *veriest* slave of the lovely vision.' To call a woman a vision is bold; to compare very, *verier*, *veriest*, is more daring. Shakspere, however, can be cited as using a double superlative, but always with judgment; and the Prayer Book says the 'Most Highest,' and the Gospel doth deny the King to be the 'Supreme Head.' To justify that expression one might cite the Latin *summa jus*—as if there could be a lower and a higher head, and the true right could be compared, or there could be two rights.

This extra-strong assertion seems to us indicative of weakness. In Colley Cibber's days the young beaux, to be more expressive, invented wild oaths, such as 'Stab my vitals,' 'Burn my liver,' 'Scorch me:' so the Yankees talk of 'Eternal smash,' 'Eternal and everlastin' perdition,' and Mr. Edmund Sparkler exhausts his small vocabulary in asserting a young lady to be a 'Bigod-fine-woman;' and thus popular writers are no doubt delighted in appealing to large audiences. The ordinary

method of flattery in appealing to an editor is to speak of his widely circulated paper, his vast body of readers. But is not this after all covert satire? Do not the wisest writers contemn the mob and the applause of the many-headed. If great books are great evils, are not widely circulated papers so in another sense?

This striving at vastness produces wonderful results on public singers and actors. We have the great Dash; the inimitable Blank. One man is the 'Hero Songster,' another the 'Lion Comique.' The side-splitting, face-tearing, convulsion-making Irish singers exhaust all epithets upon themselves in the endeavour to be original, like that actor that advertised his bespeak upside down, under the pretence that if he did not do so his *bene*fit would have turned out a *male*fit. That a farce should be a 'roaring' farce, and that the audience, probably disgusted at its folly, should roar at it like so many bulls of Bashan, was long ago an accepted fact. One theatre, however, goes beyond roaring in these dramatic trifles, it produces 'screamers;' a 'regular —— screamer' is the recognised formula wherein a mild composition, which sends home the audience sadder and wiser men, meditative on the follies of farce writers, is announced.

'It being a recognised fact,' says Mr. Dickens, discoursing of Mr. Crummles, 'that no British audience will ever come to a theatre unless it is fully persuaded that it cannot get in,' one is not surprised at such notices as

'overflowing houses, no standing room in the pit, glorious galleries, and bursting boxes'—these are the eccentricities to be caught like the measles, in the midst of a sanguine and over-hopeful class, the votaries of which prefer tights and spangles, rouge, feathers, and burnt cork, with a doubtful salary of 30*s.* a week, to the more prosaic, dull work, and infinitely more comfortable life, which would yield them five times as much. A few plaudits, probably from paid palms, the rap of an umbrella, and the yell of one boy in the gallery, has been described before now as 'thunders of applause,' and has sent more than one rival actor with jealousy to his bed. So Miss Petowker, of T. R. D., describes the fall of a single bouquet, bought for the purpose by herself, and flung by the walking gentleman, with a paper shirt-front and Berlin gloves, from the stage box, as an 'avalanche of flowers,' and the manager improves the occasion by calling in half a dozen soldiers off duty, and describing them as an 'army of supernumeraries.' The stage is itself an unreality; its expressions, like its simulated feasts and unreal viands, its fruits of coloured paper, and its pies of pasteboard, are vast, but empty. We may, therefore, pardon its exaggerations, but, in real life, we may be sure that no scholar or gentleman will willingly exaggerate or speak beyond the truth. The first step in that way is dangerous, it is more than a crime in society; it is a blunder. To talk of being immensely funny, prodigiously pleased,

excessively and beyond expression annoyed, all the while you are expressing your chagrin; to speak of such a scene being 'wofully comic,' and a picnic passing off in a way that was 'awfully jolly,' is superlatively nonsensical, if nothing else. No sane man wishes to speak a mere *argot*, a slang which, to the uninitiated, is as incomprehensible as the unknown tongue. Language may have been given, as the bitter satirist said, to conceal men's thoughts, but not in that way. Big, bombastic, and swelling words, without thoughts to agree with them, are as ridiculous as the titles assumed by the pauper lunatics in Hanwell, and are often used by those who have not the excuse of madness. Every sensible gentleman will wish to avoid such folly; and, to secure himself against the risk of these and like errors, he cannot do better than study the full meaning, value, and weight of every word he employs.

CHAPTER XI.

AWKWARDNESS.

CHAPTER XI.

English Artists and Art—Chic—Lord Chesterfield—The English accused of Want of Geist—Mr. Arnold—Art in Silver—Gerome—Meissonnier—English Landscape—Want of London Management.

IN one of the late foreign exhibitions, English artists, who made a very fair show, came off with only one of many gold medals, and were consoled in their failure by being told that their productions were not *chic*. This piece of slang was not 'understanded of the common people' who live in Tyburnia and Belgravia, but has been for some years in vogue with the artists and students of Paris and their companions. It has travelled from the Quartier Bréda to the Boulevards, and it is now widely used by the artist class, which comprehends those who write as well as paint in England. That we are not 'chic' needs

scarcely to be said. The accusation that English ladies have five thumbs, instead of one and four fingers, has the merit of having been preferred by the politest nation in the world, and of being at least as old as the days of Rochefoucauld. Lord Chesterfield cites against his countrymen the charges of awkwardness and *mauvaise honte*, which he wishes his son, by means of a Continental education, to be free from. Actually, therefore, he wishes him to be 'chic,' much as his lordship detested slang. What does this mysterious expression mean? The boys of Paris use it, and the artists still find it handy to express the inexpressible. It means really what we would intimate by 'skill or knack.' 'Il y a du chic dans ce tableau,' there is power, worth, expression in that picture; or they may say of an actor, 'Cet artiste a du chic,' that tragedian has stuff in him. Moreover, the little word pronounced sharply 'shik,' can be used very forcibly to express contempt. A *dame du comptoir*, asking a young fellow with a fine massive gold watch-chain what o'clock it was, saw, when he produced his timepiece, a miserable Geneva silver watch; 'Ah!' she cried, 'ce n'est pas chic!' The externals did not imply internals; and similarly to certain careless, thoughtless, blundering work, to ungainly awkwardness, to listless endeavour which never compasses its end, we may hear that it is not chic!

Mr. Arnold found that the Germans accused the English of a want of 'geist'—spirit, mind, pluck, or really

chic. The accusation coming from both nations, from the thoughtful German and the vivacious Frenchman, may well make us pause. Is it true? Is there no foundation for the assertion? So much as a man loves this great country, so much as he appreciates her many noble and admirable qualities, her real virtues and her earnest endeavours, he will be pained, when comparing—and the comparison will be constantly forced on him—to find in almost everything a real want of *geist* or *chic*, or prompt, compact, educated and active thought in politics, in art, and in literature. We outlive our blunders, it is true; but surely we cannot claim sufficient prescience or spirit to avoid falling into them. In the Exposition referred to England bore her part, but it was not the foremost part she once bore. An ordinary show of English pictures and a motley assembly of provincial papers was surely no great claim to the possession of the coveted quality. We ought to have known what we are about, and to have excelled in other things than china and cut glass. Certainly we had a curious collection of all the silver race cups won since 1854, huge piles of inartistic metal with no 'chic' about them, and we had certain engines and machines which the French equalled and the Belgians surpassed. Our very best work is in the Government shed, where Palliser's chilled shot, and Armstrong's breech-loading cannon astonish the French by the crushing results exhibited on the

'Warrior' targets and the sides of armour-clads; but people do say that it showed no very great 'chic' to exhibit at a glance the carefully-tabulated results of years of the most costly experiments, and to teach possibly hostile nations the best and shortest method of battering our sea and land defences to pieces. Is it the thing—is it 'chic'—to show a rival one's hand at cards?

As regards art, the want of this quality is certainly apparent with us. In good French pictures there is compact thought, power, good execution, and everything that culture and learning can do. The French painter knows the alphabet of his art at least, and if he fails, it is only for want of genius. But very many English painters exhibit a waste of genius for want of thorough art teaching. One shows us a number of people, cut into bits by the frame of the picture, crawling down the side of a ship; another, huge figures covering the whole canvas in native ugliness at a pit's mouth. No wonder that French judges, accustomed to clean, careful, elegant work, overlooked the eccentricities of pre-Raphaelite genius. If we want to know why they do so, and disregard, as gentlemen, the stupid cries of favouritism we have only to look at the 'Chic,' of Gerome and Meissonier, and the want of all this in all except a few of our artists. Let us look too, for instance, at our pre-Raphaelite art in woodcuts, which invades even our caricatures, our tall figures, bewhiskered and listless swells, our

coats, gowns, and trousers filling up the whole of the pictures; the ragged work, black patches, pen-and-ink skies, woolly trees, rude and German-like cross-hatchings, and the utter want of finish which is observable in every illustrated book which we now see.

Compare the old landscapes of Birket Foster, who has abandoned the wood, and the figure illustrations of John Leech and John Gilbert, with our present woodcuts.

True art is nature to advantage dressed,

is an incontrovertible maxim, and yet we dress our figures to such disadvantage that a picture of a workman or a sportsman is pervaded, not with the notion of a man, not with the character of an individual, but with an unmistakable velveteen jacket or a pair of corduroy trousers in which you can count the very lines. Moreover, ugly as this exaggeration is, it is not more false than it is ugly. Figures of the size of woodcuts would lose all especial texture of their dress; and yet our thoughtless artists, because they see grain in the wood of a door seven feet high, run a false imitation of it over its similitude which is only two inches. The same blundering attempt to do something without the requisite thought of how it should be done pervades, let us sadly own, most things English. Let us pass from this art to architecture; let us look at our streets, leading nowhere, the side streets blocked up so as to overload the arteries of trade; the

houses built of rough stone, so as to be overloaded with soot; the streets badly paved, with interstices so left that the mud can work up in wet weather, and the dust arise in the dry. Let us see how we mend the streets by fits and starts, first letting them be full of holes; how we allow the turncock to pick up a portion and leave a hillock of stones improperly laid, which, just as it gets worn down, is peremptorily pulled up by the gas-man; how we allow nuisances to accumulate; permit railroads to knock down and leave in ruins whole quarters of the town; make no provision for lodging our working classes, when such provision would render them healthy and contented, and pay the parish as well; how acres on acres of valuable land in the City have been for years a desert haunted by night by thieves and bad people, and by day by crowds of betting-men equally bad; how we look in vain for a head, and never do anything but make a job; how artists design law courts, which should be plain—noble, not costly in design—with a perfect forest of small towers and a useless central tower fit only for the minster bells of a Gothic cathedral, a paradise for sparrows, a trap for soot and smoke; how other artists fail utterly in producing even a creditable design for a National Gallery; how 'the finest site in Europe,' Trafalgar Square, has become a stony desert, the playground of roughs—but there is enough to consider to make us sadly own that we want both Geist and Chic, and the first thing to remedy that want is to acknowledge it.

CHAPTER XII.

SATIRE. ITS USE AND ABUSE.

CHAPTER XII.

A Great Want—Truth a Libel—Vulgar Satirists—The Bon Ton—Swift—Hogarth—Modern Satire—Thackeray.

A VERY thoughtful and learned writer, who has changed this world for another, told his audience that one of the great wants of the age was Satire. That had gone out, he said, with the imposition of the law of libel. A libel is anything calculated to give pain, and the truth must be a libel because it certainly must pain many persons of whom it is spoken.

On the other hand, Pope's doctrine that, 'Take it as a rule, no creature smarts so little as a fool' is quite true, but, how libellous would Pope have been found in these days! the persons whom satire hits are not fools but persons of acute perception and bad taste, who are led to do wrong because they see it done by persons of fashion.

Now, although English literature may be presumed to have reached that state indicated by the Roman poet, when he said 'that it was difficult not to write satire,' for literature is, after all, but a reflex of society, and surely society demands a purge, and requires an occasional satire, as sharp and pungent as it can be made. We have, however, passed, long ago, that early stage of satiric genius which produced such rude and raw exponents of the art as Donne and Oldham, who may, in literature, stand as parallel examples, as in the newspaper press the 'Age' and 'Argus,' the 'Censor' and the 'Satirist,' or, more lately still, those heavy and intense articles, which, from the pen of Mr. Douglas Jerrold, threw such a lurid light upon the first and middle pages of his weekly newspaper. Doubtless there is a public which still appreciates the mental food, as there is another public which demands something hot and stinging in what it eats, and something ardent and acrid in its drink. But the better class have grown into better tastes, and we wonder at the state of society which could have produced fools enough to patronise Mr. Barnard Gregory, the *facile princeps* of the 'Satirist,' and could have found amusement in the scandalous paragraph which acquainted the world of the fact of the 'Duke of A—— being seen riding with a chambermaid in his chariot,' or the 'Earl of C—— enticing the wife of one of his subalterns into the barrack mess-room.' Still more do we

wonder at the greasy satisfaction with which the 'Editor' penned the words, 'Our eye is on the delinquents,' and at the cowardice of those delinquents in subsidising the 'Editor' in order to keep their names out of the paper. The success of these enterprises produced imitations in the inferior walks of life. Even in lowest depths there were found deeper still. The 'Town' and 'Paul Pry' and 'Penny Satirist' did for greengrocers and butchers what the 'Age' and 'Satirist' performed for baronets and earls. 'Joe S——, or little black-whiskered Jack,' were advised not to talk so much to the barmaid; or 'to give over paying visits to the tommy-shop,' 'or Paul' would again be at them; so that what with the 'eye' of the 'Satirist,' and the muddy umbrella of 'Paul Pry,' society, high and low, must have been kept in a state of chronic ferment. We may be sure that some of this mud stuck. Indeed, the satirists themselves were but bad imitations of the 'Bon Ton' and 'Town and Country' magazines; and searchers in contemporary history will find it difficult to distinguish between the false and true, in reading some of the *tête-à-têtes* of the latter, such as those between the Rev. W. Whitfield and the subtle sinner, and Jemmy Twitcher (Earl of Sandwich) and Miss R(eay).

Satire now-a-days does not walk so much in the mud, nor did it ever do so with the masters of the art. If Dryden be abusive and foul in his 'Mackflecknoe,' one

cannot but acknowledge that he is wise and beneficent in his 'Absalom and Achitophel.' The characters there are drawn with a pen which never faltered in its delineations, and they stand out as real and as true in their way as the Raphael chalk portraits in theirs. Villiers and Shaftesbury will never escape from the pen of Dryden, any more than John Dennis will from that of Pope. But the satirist, as all satirists do, harmed himself as much as he did the objects of his anger, and himself was gibbeted when caught. The Recording Angel which reaches the Heaven of posterity, drops a tear upon man's failings which effectually erases them, although their vices are proof against such a detergent; and follies, not vices, are the true objects of satire. In saying this we are not excusing either; indeed, we doubt whether, for actual amount of evil done, the fool does surpass the rogue; certain it is that folly has done more harm to society than vice. We suspect a rogue, but we cannot guard against a fool; we may shield ourselves from the pistol of an enemy, but we are lost if our own weapon breaks in our hand. A race of gentler satirists than Dryden and Pope soon perceived this, just as the former had seen that the ridicule of Aristophanes was ever so much keener, and more useful as a weapon than the tremendous invective of Juvenal or Persius. Indeed, the latter can scarcely be called satirists in the true sense. It is not satirical to photograph a pest-house, or to give

a line-for-line drawing of a horrible deformity. Hogarth was not satirical when he drew 'Gin Lane,' but he was so in his 'Election,' and his 'March to Finchley,' and in many other works. The last picture of his 'Harlot's Progress' or of his 'Rake' may boast one or two satiric touches; but the Painter rises far above satire, and wails, like another Jeremiah, over the sins and sorrows of the city. So again with Swift. That writer had far too high a genius to be commonly understood. Hence many people abuse him instead of loving him; hence the words, beast, man-hater, foul-tongued fellow, applied to him. But Swift understood himself. In his 'Tale of a Tub' and 'Gulliver' he penned as fine satires as the world ever saw; but in his verses 'On a Lady's Bedchamber,' and others of the sort, he spoke dirt, and meant to speak dirt, and was too earnest to be satirical. He claims credit for it in more places than one, and of his satire he says, in his letter to Sir Charles Hogan, 'I had a design to laugh the follies out of existence, and to whip the vices out of practice;' but he adds that that design and that satiric genius had been his great bar through life. So it was, and is: try to improve the world, and it will hate you, if it suspects the design.

Knowing this, as we have said, a milder kind of satire grew prevalent. Dr. Young has shown, in his 'Universal Passion,' that he knew too well what he was about to hit very hard. His remarks were general, and he left par-

ticulars to themselves. Great sinners, he thought, should be dealt with by the law. He would attack the vice, and not the vicious. A judge might just as well have sentenced Murder, and let go Greenacre or Daniel Good. But the astute Doctor thrived, and nobody said of him, as they did of Pope, that he was a 'nasty, spiteful little devil.' Dr. Young never had the courage of Pope; the latter writes:

> There are—I scarce can think it, but am told,
> There are to whom my satire seems too bold.
> Scarce to wise —— complaisant enough,
> And something said of Chartres much too rough.

But, in spite of this, he still spoke of Chartres, and still hit at Lord Fanny (Hervey)—

> —— That bug with gilded wings,
> That painted child of dirt, who stings and sings,

and finally slew his hecatomb at the altar of Satire in the 'Dunciad.'

Good and mild Cowper followed too much in the wake of Young to give piquancy to his verses. Sound and admirable as they are, smartly as they hit the freethinker and the debauchee, they are never personal. The satirist lashed only the vices, and his example is now generally followed. Peter Pindar, Churchill, and Gifford created some amusement in their day. Peter was personal enough, but he said rude things, and practised invective

rather than satire. It is not satirical to assert of Sir Joseph Banks, 'that strange to utter, he, when a very little boy at school, ate spiders spread upon his bread and butter;' it is not satirical to expose the poor old mad king in his conversations with Whitbread, or his questions about the apple dumpling. All these are within the boundaries of clever sarcasm, and that often very unscrupulous. Peter Pindar Wolcot could do better than this, and has done better, and has humour and satiric power, too, in abundance.

The days of strong versified abuse are, however, gone. Almost every writer is now a satirist; some are of the very mildest possible description, but literary scalp-hunters are few. Articles savage and slaughterly appear occasionally, but their appearance is hailed with disapprobation, and the satirist contents himself with exposing the club-foot of the limping exquisite, or showing the rouge pot and wrinkles of the old beau. The 'dear wicked satiric creatures,' as the ladies call them, are very strong upon ladies' hats and crinoline; upon ugly old women who are weak enough to wish to keep their precious youth; upon the ugly women who try to look pretty; upon the vulgar who wish to be fashionable; or the poor little city gent, who, rising from a lower form of life, tries to ape the dress and behaviour of his betters. All these are legitimate objects of satire, but the wrath expended upon them is not very god-like. It is easy to

crush a butterly upon a wheel, but the frivolous occupation will not add to one's strength. The mildness, meekness, and perfect propriety under which the writers of 'Punch' manage to rein their *esprit moqueur* may be and are conducive to calm language, but certainly do not give rise to any vigour of thought. We doubt whether the whole nation is not weakened by the proceeding; and it is but lately, when certain incompetent generals lost us whole brigades, and starved men and horses by the troop, that the dead level of English feeling showed itself. *Indignatio facit versus* possibly, but the scorn and hatred at such proceedings were not divine enough for poetry, and no indignant *vates* branded the fools and imbeciles to all eternity; the latter, therefore, escaping the satire, quietly have kept their places, and have even received honours (?).

Strong, sound satire, such as Churchill could have penned would have done us service; but our nearest approach to Churchill was Jerrold, a man of a very capable but limited spirit, whose best sarcasms were so polished and successful that he with many others thought himself a satirist. When he told a friend, who urged that both being litterateurs they rowed 'in the same boat;' yes, but 'not with the same sculls,' he merely vented what rhetoricians call an antanaclasis, and unscholastic people a pun with a sarcastic turn. He was often offensively bitter, and he earned for himself that

which he did not deserve—the reputation of an unkindly man. This he was not, but he was so continually employed in making up sharp sayings that he could not stay to pick and choose the persons upon whom to vent them. His best sayings are in his comedies. His books of satire, read even at this short distance of time, are excessively ponderous and heavy. It is one thing to attack a man with a club, another to prick him with a lancet. One school thought that a man could not be touched unless his brains were knocked out. The intention of such satirists is always evident, whereas satire should be like summer lightning, visible to all, but fatal only to the vermin and noxious insects.

The *Magnus Apollo* of satire of late years, everyone will say, was Mr. Thackeray; indeed, his last novel, 'Lovel the Widower,' seemed to promise but a collocation of sly things whispered in the ear of society by its satiric monitor. But it seems to us that his power in this way is much inferior to that of his master, Fielding—or even to that of Dickens. When the latter tells us of a certain German baron, who being visited with conscientious qualms of a murder, seized upon certain wood and stone belonging to a weaker baron, and built a chapel with them, thereby hoping to propitiate Heaven, the satire is so true and pungent that we all feel touched by it. *Our* offerings also are too often polluted, and we gain a deeper knowledge of ourselves. When Mr. Punch in his

earlier days used, as a pendant to the descriptions of fashionable parties, to describe the supper of Mr. Brown the sweep and Hoggins the costermonger, upon whose table bread and cheese and onions and other delicacies of the season were observed, the satire was so true and keen, although gentle, that the 'Morning Post' and 'Court Journal' were considerably amended thereby.

But the author of 'Vanity Fair' owned few such gentle touches. Satyr-like, he used his crook for the purpose of lifting up the skirts of society, and exhibiting her clay feet; he has written chapter after chapter on the pilfering landladies, swaggering captains, clownish baronets, and dubious aristocracy: we feel that our neighbours are hit rather than ourselves, and we go on our way rejoicing. This kind of satire does no good. It makes us regard all around us with a cynic sneer, and perpetually cry out, 'Ah! it is all very well, saintly Miss Dash and good Mr. Blank, but you have a skeleton in your cupboard as well as the rest. So on, *ad nauseam*, the phrases of social scepticism soon grow stale; and the satirist, who perpetually grinds over the same dull tune, enervates and debases rather than reforms.

CHAPTER XIII.

ON THE CULTIVATION OF VIRTUE.

CHAPTER XIII.

Good to be Grown—Examination—Cram—Modern Schoolboys — Blunderers — Diplomacy — Successful Roguery — The true Hero.

CAN you raise good men and women as you raise potatoes? In Norfolk they will breed you turkeys to the pound weight, and raise oxen that shall be so many inches long in the horn. You may have it all to order—turkey, potato, or ox: nay, there is in Covent Garden a fruit-salesman, who, give him but six weeks' notice, will supply peaches, strawberries, early peas, or pine-apples, to your table at any season of the year. It is only a matter with him of forcing on or keeping back. Can we produce statesmen, poets, soldiers, or good men, women, and citizens, in a like manner? This simile of a vegetable and a man—man being himself but a pestilent forked radish of a fellow, who

struts and stares, and moans or frets his hours away—is a very old one. The ornate Thomson, 'more fat than bard beseems,' suggested the idea to our infant understandings. 'Delightful task,' he says, 'to rear the tender thought, to teach the young idea how to shoot;' as if man was but a succulent plant, a young vine, or a frame cucumber, that should be pushed that way or led this. And yet cucumbers have troubled wise men, having a tendency to curl up in the fashion of a ram's horn, or to run spindling down, and then to bulge out in a bulbous way at the end, as is the manner with some noses of our acquaintance. Can a man be as easily guided as a cucumber by that genius, who, placing straight lamp glasses in the beds, made the gherkins grow to maturity with that charming propriety and symmetry, of which examples are to be seen at our fruiterers'?

The French nation has for some years had an idea that virtue could and can be cultivated. So have the Chinese, or, as they called them in Dampier's time, the 'Chineesses.' The French have periodical examinations, a constant surveillance, and then, with an awful oration, in the midst of applausive parents, *épiciers*, and fat citizens, they, after kissing the boys on each cheek, stick a wreath on their heads, and give them a bundle of books. Unhappily, prize boys, and prize poems, and prize everything, except ploughs and sewing-machines, turn out badly here. Whether the extravagant feeding

did not produce the cattle disease was a question gravely propounded; whether cramming boys with learning, which at best they cannot well comprehend, does not produce a useless and feelingless animal, which 'blows' early, like a flower forced in a hot-house, and which afterwards puts forward neither flower nor fruit, is another question which many persons have decided in the affirmative. Too much cramming in early life produces, Mr. Dickens would have us believe, a kind of Mr. Toots, who becomes, when he grows up, a puzzle-headed fellow, full of listless indifference.

That boys learn more now at school is, perhaps, certain. The scope of education is more extensive, the matter more varied. Too wide by far, it seems to many, is the view taken of the education of youth, arising, as we think, from the mistaken view that education should cease after leaving school or college, and that extreme youth is the only seed-time of life. Not only is this but partially true in many respects, but on the whole it is deplorably false. The purport of education is only to fit a man to learn, not to fill him with learning. We do not take all our meals at breakfast-time, nor should we insist upon loading our heads with learning in the morning of life. To create a general fitness for reception, and to ascertain the particular tendency of the mind, can be, and ever should be, the only aim of the educator. During the time of a boy's or girl's separation from the

home of the parents, the qualities least prominent in the majority of homes, such as regularity, simplicity of living, a Spartan plainness of diet, hardihood, self-reliance, and bravery, should be instilled. These really may be taught so as to become part and parcel of the boy. At present, however, a very different system prevails; and at some of our most noted schools the foundation is laid, not for virtue and hardiness in after life, but for the most contemptible and effeminate of vices.

'With some of them,' writes a gentleman of our schoolboys at Christmas, 'I travelled in the train. There they sat, with their burnished chimney-pots and their kid gloves, their spotless clothes and faultless boots—the most conceited little prigs in the universe! The very look of them told you how remarkably satisfied they were with themselves. "We are Etonians" was expressed in every feature. Some of them were young lords, crawled to, and fawned on, and flattered already, and even now assuming the airs of consequence, as of those who take homage as their due. Others are sent by tuft-hunting, parasite parents expressly to tuft-hunt, to form connections which may serve them in after life, to have it said that they have been at Eton with a young marquis, and have been bowled from him at cricket; to acquire the early habits and manners of gentlemen in the very *genteelest* society.'

This is not the way to form English boys. But, unfor-

tunately, the picture is too true. These boys are fops while they are yet children, and have credit at the tailors, and 'tick' at the confectioners, where they run up bills for truffled turkeys and ices. Drunkenness is not unknown among them, and foppery is a common characteristic. Is this the way to form men who shall hereafter govern England? Are the upper classes giving themselves a fair chance? It was not so formerly at Rugby or Shrewsbury, nor is it so now at Wellington College, a soldier's school, founded by Prince Albert. Wellington himself complained of the puppies and fops of Eton, though he afterwards added, 'but these puppies fight well.' Yes, certainly, and fight they did, but not better than the ploughmen and young tailors that they led. All British men have a certain amount of pluck; but by what rule parents can allow their boys to be spoilt—to read of the severe Cato and virtuous Scipio, and yet to be neither exact nor virtuous—is a wonder. In after life most of such boys turn out blunderers, when their high rank forces them (more's the pity!) into diplomatic and official life. These blunderers are very harmful to us all, and have cost England more than the whole of the aristocracy has ever won for her. Beyond *that*, which is serious enough, such schoolboys only harm themselves. We may be sure that, omitting exceptional and favoured cases, these boys miss their place in life, and can no more compete with a fierce democracy, or rule a nation

beneficially, than an over-fed Italian greyhound can course and catch a hare upon the Chiltern Hills.

The 'cultivation of virtue,' which should be commenced at school, is now almost totally neglected for that of ability, adroitness, or quickness; for these qualities carry away the prizes. What is really prize-worthy is capacity and goodness. Our boys are not handicapped: a very quick boy in the midst of half-a-dozen dull ones gains the prize as easily as a racehorse when matched against six or seven road-hacks. The French system is better, and it extends also—and here we differ from them—to after-life, when the Montholon prizes are given openly to those, in any class of life, who have exhibited goodness. A year or so ago a young milliner, and a person who kept a shop, were picked out as the two most worthy, and received the prize. Of course, to those young people who are nothing if not critical, this crowning of two persons in a humble state of life is something ridiculous. But it is not so to the recipients, nor is it in reality so to any but Laodicean sceptics, who, understanding little, sneer at everything.

It is but natural that the lower strata of society should furnish the more frequent examples of real goodness. The actual foible is this: that, were we to crown all deserving people, we should always see crowds of crowned heads walking along the streets. How many men and women devote the whole of their lives to others, take but

an indifferent share of what they earn, and, after a life of hardship, creep to their obscure graves without an idea that they have done a meritorious action? How many self-sacrifices are daily made, without the show or advertisement which accompanies the action of the warrior, or the brave doing of him who gains the Victoria cross? There is, unhappily, little doubt that our criminal population is a large one; but it is not a hundredth nor a thousandth part so large as that beneficial population which pays all the taxes, keeps the Queen and the Queen's troops, pays judges, lawyers, preachers, soldiers, policemen, and gaolers; and, lastly, feeds and pets the poor rogues themselves, when they are undergoing their punishment in a capital healthy receptacle for criminals, called a prison, in which many people say, and we honestly believe with truth, Mr. Rogue is made a great deal too comfortable.

True virtue, which can be cultivated, is nevertheless so vigorous a plant, that it grows best in its native state. When it is true, moreover, it never wants any reward. It is ridiculous to the man, and supremely so to society, to reward a labourer who for forty years has laboured, brought up a family, kept himself honest, sober, pious, respected, and poor—has never complained nor rebelled, but has borne his life's trials like a hero—it is absurd to reward such a man with a new pair of breeches, as does the old Tory Farming Association, with Mr. Disraeli

at its head. Such honest peasants are God's saints here, and look to their reward hereafter. We do not know what we owe to their simple virtues. As ten righteous men would have saved Sodom, so this country, in many trials and corruptions in James I., Charles II., George II., and George IV.'s times, to judge from history, could only have been saved by God's grace given to the poor and virtuous of the land. As for the court, city, and high society, they stank, and were corrupt And yet, forsooth, Rochester and Chiffinch were just the men to preside at a meeting which would reward (?) with a new smock-frock a worn-out ploughman,whose virtue had saved them, and whose labour had fed them! No: virtue gets not its reward in this world, neither does it look for it. It is the weakness of a generous heart to look for the eye which speaks thankfulness, and the murmured blessing of the one it has relieved; but, in reality, it does good for good's sake, and it is better not to think of any return. One cannot *pay* virtue, nor buy goodness. Honesty is not to be raised by policy only. When a man is honest only from motive, it is fair to infer that he would be roguish, also, should that pay better.

These considerations will comfort young people, who often deplore that the best men sometimes get the worst of it in this world, and that the great prizes of wealth, honour, station, and titles, often fall to those who have least deserved them. But what then? This is all proper.

Virtue itself is its own great reward. The motto is as old as Cato, and, if looked at properly, is a consoling truth. So sings Alexander Pope:—

> But sometimes Virtue starves, while Vice is fed—
> What then? Is the reward of Virtue bread?

If the knave is clever, he deserves his money. If rigging the market, and picking the pockets of shareholders of the Doem, Cheatem, and Smashem Railway makes money, the promoters of that great line, with Lord Brag and Sir Mendax Pinto at their head, earn the money, and in a very dirty way too. Let us thank God that our table ale is not mixed with the tears of ruined orphans and widows, as is the 'dry' sherry of these men; and that the 'pop' of our lemonade does not remind us, as does that of the directors' champagne, of the report of a suicide's pistol. Rich living, trouble, toil, extra servants that cheat, and a great house that is a great trouble, are a fit reward of many clever men, and a troublesome crown to some good men too. Good men claim, and get, quite another kind of prize :—

> What nothing earthly gives, nor can destroy,
> The soul's calm sunshine, and the heartfelt joy,
> Is Virtue's prize. A better would you fix?
> Then give Humility a coach and six,
> Virtue a conqueror's sword, or Truth a crown,
> Or public spirit its great cure, a crown!

Solvuntur risu tabulæ! The whole company breaks

into inextinguishable laughter at Humility riding in a coach and six, and a man who has devoted his life to the public having a crown put on his head and being made a king, so that the public shall hate him. Virtue, then, cannot be paid in this world; the world's coinage is not current in her kingdom. Sometimes Virtue is starved; she is often beaten, imprisoned, gagged, and harried out of house and home; but she carries her reward, her consolation, her food, comfort, and glory with her in her bosom; it is a little herb of grace—the love of God.

But if she cannot be paid, she can be cultivated. Honest reason well applied to ethics must tell us that, after all, what is right is best. A knowledge of physiology will assure us, without the shadow of a doubt, that as a rule, riches, state, and position are but gilded sorrows, and that poverty—comparative poverty, not starvation, in which the great majority of the world exists—is infinitely happier than affluence or riches. Good sense will easily make all these apparent paradoxes plain enough. A man once was examined for a fellowship of three hundred a year, lost it, and lived to thank God for his loss. In the meantime he had cultivated reflection, reason, and content. 'We, ignorant of ourselves,' says the ever-wise Shakspere, 'beg often our own harms, which the wise powers deny us for our good; so find we profit by losing of our prayers.' It takes a good deal of schooling on the part of the eager, ignorant, and im-

patient heart of man to learn the truth of that; but true it is.

Young people are imitative. Hence we are quite right in putting before them examples of heroic virtue, either fictitious, historical, or real, and in having the story told simply and plainly. The boys and girls being unspoilt, you will soon see which person they like best: Cæsar Augustus, surrounded by his flattering poets, or Brutus, dying upon the field; Milton, old, blind, and deserted, or the fawning and successful Monk, the Earl of Albemarle, rewarded for his treachery by a coronet; Charlotte Corday, marching with her pearl pink face, lighted up with a pale glow of triumph, to the prison which leads but to the scaffold, or the Judges, clothed in pride and drunken with overstrained power, who condemned her. Why, the very chains of the prisoner are robes of starry gold compared to the glittering frippery of the sordid monarch who condemns him! Let Xerxes swell and bourgeon in the fumes of his power, like a gilded dunghill fly in the sun; let court poet and historian sing his praises over and over again; let him die in glory, and be buried in such a pyramid that it should stare the moon out of countenance; yet he would not equal the simple glory of Leonidas and his Spartans lying under the bare stone in a mountain pass, with the simple inscription—'Stranger, tell it at Lacedæmon, that we died here in obedience to her laws.' Such stories as these will beat

all those selfish and foolish narrations of successful merchants: how Paul's penny became a thousand pounds; and how Peter scraped and starved his wife and family till he was rich enough to take a large house and make the yellow gold run in a stream into his pocket. He had better made true, honest feelings run out of his heart.

By example, then, by narrative, and by a constant appeal to the true state of things, virtue can be cultivated either in ourselves or in others. We had better set about it, for as matters stand we shall want—indeed we now want—an extra supply of that article, which is much better than rifled guns, or armour-plates, or breech-loaders. We want our eyes opened to justice, so as to see clearly and to judge rightly; to be firm in our refusal to move; or, when we do move, to do so in the right path. Hitherto we have done well, and have been accompanied with blessings; but now around us things somewhat darken. We shall have much ado to hold our own; and the only way for us to do so truly, either as individual men or as a nation, is to understand virtue, and to cultivate it carefully.

CHAPTER XIV.

BRITISH PHILISTINISM.

CHAPTER XIV.

A New Word—Philistia of Old—Milton's Samson—A Shade more Soul—The Barbarians—The People—Mr. Carlyle and the Nobility—Trade—The World's Ideals.

A SINGULAR son of a very remarkable father—one who is in some measure a leader of modern thought, has helped to circulate a new word,* and to affix upon British men and manners a new name. Matthew Arnold, the son of Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, a name dear to many, be-

* The word *Philister*, or Philistine, was used in its modern sense by Carlyle, Sydney Smith, and others before Matthew Arnold was born; it has been current in Germany—more particularly in university towns among students—as a cant term to express *the trading townspeople*, the *Kleinstädter* of Lessing, for more than a century. Carlyle coined our English *Philistinism*, and the word soon found currency in America. Matthew Arnold adopts it in its German sense—the littleness of trade in money-grubbing.

loved by the boys' hearts still remaining in the breasts of grey-headed men, one of the chief leaders in Church and State, is he who has done this; and it is worth while to examine how far he is truly inspired when he plays upon this one-stringed harp, and endeavours to affix on his countrymen a name disgraceful and abhorrent to all the noble and pure-minded.

We must go back to sacred history, and no less to the poetry of Milton, to examine who the Philistines were. People who have merely an indefinite idea that they were a rich nation on the confines of Judæa, often at war with the Israelites, and whose soldiers were slaughtered by the thousand with the jawbone of an ass, wielded by Samson, will not realise nor feel the insult and the sneer, nor will they profit by the lesson, which we think at least necessary and salutary.

The Philistines, as we should properly call these people, then inhabited the plain of Philistia; and bounded on the north by Phœnicia and Syria, and on the south by Egypt and Arabia, the fertility and the position of their country gave them enormous wealth. So far they were like England. 'Ashdod and Gaza were the keys of Egypt, and commanded the transit trade,' says a writer on this people; 'and the stores of frankincense and myrrh which Alexander captured at the latter place prove it to have been a depôt of Arabian produce.' Moreover, the Philistines seem to have possessed a navy,

and to have attacked the Egyptians from their ships: they were extremely skilful as armourers, smiths, and as architects of walled and strong towns. They were skilled goldsmiths, for they made emerods and gold mice, images, and gods and goddesses without question. Their wealth was abundant, and they were strong in their own conceit, given to feasting, to assembling together and holding long palavers or parliaments, and had all the appearances of a strong and eminently respectable people. If we take these characteristics, we shall find that Mr. Matthew Arnold, who so well knows how to point his satire, was not very wrong in calling us by the name he has used.

It is just when Philistia is at the culmination of her complacent power, able to worry and oppress the Israelites, ready to send armed men from her own rich land to spoil that of her poor but holier neighbours, that there appears on the scene a very remarkable man, named Samson, who was 'a Nazarite unto God from the womb.' Previous to his birth, his mother drank no wine nor strong drink; neither did she eat any unclean thing. Samson grew up a very tower of strength, mighty as the fabled Hercules, if indeed he was not he, 'and the spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.'

How it moved him we all know. Despising the rich living of the Philistines, caring neither for their gold-

smiths' work, nor for their great trade, nor for their wine and their feastings, their riches, their clothing, and their large houses, although they had dominion over Israel, he sought an occasion against them, and, as we know, not in vain. Tricked by them with regard to his riddle and the raiment, he went down to Ashkelon and slew thirty men of them, and took their spoil, and gave change of garments unto them which expounded his riddle. Afterwards he set fire-branded foxes into their standing corn, and smote them hip and thigh with great slaughter, and again, with the jawbone of an ass, slew a thousand of them, was bound and snared, and again burst forth to slay them, until, snared by Delilah, he was blinded by his enemies, made a mockery of, and set to grind corn while the Philistian lords feasted in a great house; when his strength came again, and he cried, 'O Lord God, remember me, I pray Thee, and strengthen me, I pray Thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes;' and then, sure that the Lord had heard him, he bowed his strong arm with all his might, holding 'the two middle pillars upon which the house stood; and the house fell upon the lords and upon all the people that were within; and the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life.'

So ends the story of Samson, judge of Israel, one who received his strength from the Lord, and who hated the

Philistines, but who was snared and blinded, and made to grind corn for them, and to be their sport, but who was faithful and undaunted, and though stained somewhat, as our new morality makes us think, with the sins of the flesh, was not yet deserted by God, but carried out in his death the end for which he was born. Certainly, he pulled down destruction on his own head; but, as his father, *Manoah*, in Milton's great dramatic poem, is made to say, even that was a triumph. He left

> To himself and father's house eternal fame;
> And, which is best and happiest yet, all this
> With God not parted from him, as was fear'd,
> But favouring and assisting to the end.
> Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
> Or knock the breast; no weakness, no contempt,
> Dispraise or blame; nothing but well and fair,
> And what may quiet us in a death so noble.

It is significant that Milton, in his blindness, turned to the history of Samson to illustrate his own feelings, and pictured to himself his loyalist countrymen rejoicing in the return of the foolish and bad King Charles II. No doubt, also, the people of England figured to him under the name of Philistines.

What Mr. Matthew Arnold means he explains more fully under the title of 'Anarchy and Authority.' He shows, by a side glance as it were, that our nation has fallen into a very sad state, and that we are, in the main, incapable of governing ourselves, and a long way out of

the true and noble road in which a nation should walk. Nor is he in this very far wrong. The great middle class, rich, self-satisfied, relying on its ships, its works, its power, and its possessions, are the *Philistines*; but we have besides, he says, in England, the aristocratic class, or the *Barbarians*, descendants of those conquerors of England and Europe, to whom we owe so much individuality; who are noted for their courtesy and culture. Only all this culture is mainly an exterior culture; it consists principally in outward gifts and graces, in looks, manners, accomplishments, prowess; the chief inward gifts which had part in it were the most exterior, so to speak, of inward gifts—those which come nearest to outward ones: they were courage, a high spirit, self-reliance. But then this class, of which Lord Elcho is taken as a type, although in the main good, has grave faults, mainly an 'insufficiency of light.' It is a brave class, and means well, but it has none of the inward spirit. 'Even when we look on these brilliant creatures,' sneers the author, 'in the presence of all their charming gifts, do we not think that there should be *a shade more soul?*'

Fond of hunting, fine manners, beautiful things, country life, high places, parks and castles, which are 'fortified posts' of the Barbarians, but for the most part without soul, and utterly, or what amounts to the same thing, habitually careless of all those below them, we will

let the representatives of this class pass by, and take another, the lowest in the scale, but beneath which there seems to us to seethe a lower depth still. This, the low, not the lowest depth, is the *Populace*, in Mr. Arnold's language, which looks forward to the happy day when it will sit on thrones, with Mr. Bazley and other middle-class potentates, to survey, as Mr. Bright beautifully says, 'the cities it has built, the railroads it has made, the manufactures it has produced, the cargoes which freight the ships of the greatest mercantile navy that the world has ever seen.' This portion of the people, therefore, which is wholly occupied in surveying itself, and according to Plato's subtle expression, 'with the things of itself and not its best self,' has much in common with the Philistines; but what is dangerous about it is, that its substratum is formed of a very dangerous class indeed. That vast portion, lastly, of the working class, which, raw and half-developed, has long lain hidden midst its poverty and squalor, and is now issuing from its hiding-place, to assert an Englishman's heaven-born privilege of doing as he likes, and is beginning to perplex us by marching where it likes, meeting where it likes, bawling what it likes, breaking what it likes—to this vast *residuum* we may with great propriety give the name of the *Populace.*

One more question from Mr. Arnold, and we have done. Have we made quite clear what he means by a

British Philistine, by those people whom we have all met on the Continent? of whom we are thoroughly ashamed, and yet in part proud, who are the backbone, as they assert, of the country, but a very ugly backbone notwithstanding. '*Philistine*,' says the modern author of the term, 'gives the notion of something particularly stiff-necked and perverse in the resistance to light and its children; and therein *it specially suits our middle class, who not only do not pursue sweetness and light*, but who prefer to them that sort of machinery of business, chapels, tea-meetings, and addresses from Mr. Murphy and the Rev. W. Cassel, which make up the *dismal and illiberal life on which I have so often touched*.'

Thus, while we are bound to acknowledge on the one hand that, living in the nineteenth century, England has reached a certain degree of civilisation, and is perhaps, as Emerson has it, 'the best of actual nations,' we can but own that it is a poor best; nay, if we think at all deeply, we shall be ready to concede that our middle-class life does want 'sweetness and light,' and that in the general routine of every-day existence it is essentially 'a dismal and illiberal life.' It is this feeling that makes all young and poetical natures—and all natures when young and fresh have something of the poet in them—exclaim against the hard-hearted nonsensical conventionalities of life, which make them often in despair run away from civilisation, nay from life itself. It is this, too, which

makes the daily intercourse of life seem so cold, so dreadful, so full of hypocrisy, which gathers people into classes, and arrays them one against the other. It is this which gives popular novelists the chance of describing the middle class as lord-loving and tuft-hunting, seldom or never looking at the merit of a man, but regarding chiefly his money and his position; not determining even that young men shall grow up wise and virtuous, but that they shall grow up the companions of Lords This and That, the college chums of some vicious nobleman; not that their daughters shall equal *Virginia* in innocence, or *Cornelia* in matronly wisdom, but that they shall make a great match and be received at Court. All this, and a dozen other traits of a selfish and narrow class, prove that the charge of Philistinism can be sustained against them.

But they are not alone. We have lately heard from Mr. Carlyle and others a great deal in praise of our aristocracy. The English nobleman, says that prophet, 'has still left in him, after such sorrowful emotions, something considerable of chivalry and magnanimity. Polite he is in the finest form; politeness—modest, simple, veritable, ineradicable—dwells in him to the bone. I incline to call him the politest kind of nobleman or man (especially his wife, the politest and gracefullest kind of woman) you will find in any country.' Yes, 'in any country,' we think this true; but we don't think much of the truth.

We do not want graceful polish only. French polish outside veneer is not the flower of life, but truth at its highest and best. The British nobleman at school, the British nobleman at college running into debt, swaggering about like a big boy, hardly amenable to rules, running up to town and on town in term time, going to chapel with a hunting-coat and top-boots under his gown, delighting in breaking the heads of the town-people, calling all below him 'cads' or 'snobs,' and yet glad to accept the subserviency of those same cads, and to borrow money of them, to go to their parties, and to air himself like a black-skinned potentate, as proud of his title as is King Jacko-Mongo-Pongee of the cocked hat and epaulettes which adorn his nakedness; this British nobleman is not the highest representative of man. Nor when he talks—and he has talked, as they yet brag of it—of sending his black footman into the House of Commons, and takes care, although his body is five hundred strong at least, never to go to the House of Lords, nay, to let his tenantry fester mentally in dark ignorance, and (as in Sussex, the other day, in one village) absolutely in typhus fever, for want of proper building improvements, while he spends his cultivated life in Paris; when he does *this*, and his order does it every day, we cannot accept the British nobleman as the highest type of man. He is a very good fellow, no doubt; not very wise, or his order would have been held in more respect; somewhat lazy and

luxurious, but—and here we must again be obliged to Mr. Matthew Arnold—a Barbarian.

Shall we find any comfort in looking on the Populace? Is that class free from reproach? Perhaps not; but it can at least say one thing: it has had less given to it, and it has done more, than any other class. You take your priests and your noblemen from the Philistines proper, and they go about the world making the best of it, for the most part, for themselves; but we, the working populace, improve it for others. There can be no doubt of that. We are misled, it is true. We have so much to do, and the battle of life goes on so hotly down our courts and alleys, and we have so much to suffer, too, that we do not always appear wise to our rulers; but we are true and leal to certain ideals; and if in the wrong—as we often are—ours is a noble error, ever striving to get to the right. Thus we are surging upwards, while the *Philistine* and *Barbarian* are driving God knows whither. *This* may be said for us.

But alas! 'tis little. The ideals of the world are shameful, lame ideals, mere idols of wood and stone, and no true gods; and this, too, after eighteen hundred years of the truest teaching, of the simplest and sublimest truth.

Happily, the Truth lives. That cannot die. Above the petty Little Pedlington class interests at this largely critical period, when Tom wants to govern, and Lord

Noodle protests that Tom does not know how; when Co-operative Stores enable everybody to rob the tradesman, and get all things at trade price, and the tradesman robs everybody, in his turn, with bank shares and railway scrip; when, from the very crown of society to its great toe, every member of the body politic is shirking responsibility, and calling upon some other member to do his work; when the ship is driving and surging onwards, and the only way to steer it properly is, says one prophet, to catch the Devil, and chain *him*—laying him up, 'tied neck and heels, and put beyond stirring, as the preliminary'; and so after this imaginary evil the whole crew are scampering, steersman and all: during all this time Truth lives, and must at last conquer. We are none of us what we should be. We have class hatreds, prejudices, wickedness, and follies. Philistinism *is* rampant amongst us. But Christianity is about to take a new development. This half-hearted faith, this imperfect mode of life, has long been weighed in the balance; the young Samson is born. When the new development shall have come to its strength, the whole of the hated and contemptible nation of Philistines will have passed away.

CHAPTER XV.

ILL-NATURED PHILOSOPHY.

CHAPTER XV.

Cynics—Timon—Modern imitators—Young Cynics—Sneering—Carlyle and Thackeray—True love—Falseness of Cynicism—Byron.

THE ancient Greeks called certain philosophers who formed a school of themselves, *Cynics*, from a word meaning a dog, because such philosophers snarled and sneered at human life, disregarded many of the duties and virtues, laughed at the responsibilities, and generally elevated themselves above their fellows by running down what other men held sacred and beautiful. It would be a piece of ignorance for us to assert that the Cynics did this, just as it would be foolish to believe that the Epicureans really held the opinion that sensual pleasure, the mere delight of eating, drinking, and being comfortable, formed the ideal of a life. Pleasure was their chief aim

but a wise pleasure will arise only from the exercise of virtue; that true and holy pleasure which is enduring can only be the true one.

To cynicism we apply almost one meaning only, and that an unpleasant one. A cynic is, metaphorically, one who growls and barks at others; he is a dog in the manger, and loves not to hear of others' successes or pleasures.

> Blame, *cynic*, if you can, quadrille or ball,
> The snug close party, or the splendid hall,
> Where Night, down stooping from her ebon throne,
> Views constellations brighter than her own.

These are Cowper's lines, and exhibit one view of cynicism. Bishop Berkeley uses, however, another meaning of the word, in which discontent is not apparent, but rather a dog-like content. He asks, in his admirable and shrewd *Querist*, 'Whether the bulk of the native Irish are not kept from thriving, by that *cynical* content in dirt and beggary which they possess to a degree beyond any other people.' Here it indicates a good nature, which by extreme tension is stretched into a vice. Modern cynicism has nothing to do with that. The quality, as at present seen, and which has become fashionable amongst our young, rich, highly-educated, but ill-conditioned young men, is excellently pourtrayed by Shakspere in his character of the Greek cynic *Apemantus*, who, while he watches the feasting and

riotous living of the *Lord Timon*, knows well how to sneer at his folly. Asked to say grace at a rich man's table, *Apemantus* growls out the following :—

> Immortal Gods, I crave no pelf;
> I pray for no man but myself :
> Grant I may never prove so fond,
> To trust man on his oath or bond,
> Or a harlot for her weeping,
> Or a dog that seems a-sleeping.
> Amen. So fall to't.
> Rich men sin, and I eat root!

Here we have the conceit, envy, selfishness, distrust and disbelief in fellow-man which properly constitute cynicism. For, observe, *Apemantus* prays for no man but himself, cares for none, believes in neither oath nor bond, does not even condescend to trust his precious carcass to the immortal Gods themselves, for so he means to tell us when he says that of them even he 'craves no pelf.' To outward appearances he gives no heed : all women are to him base, all dogs he distrusts, and believes that they may turn and rend him ; finally, he concludes with a piece of self-laudation, which wisdom teaches us is ridiculous, and faith sinful. Rich men, he says, sin in their luxurious feeding ; but *I* eat root ; that is, *I* am better than they, because I find that vegetable food agrees with me better than meats. Anything farther from grace, for the willingness to accept what was placed before him and

be thankful, could hardly be conceived. *Apemantus* has contrived to unite the worst qualities of the Grecian Cynic and of the Jewish Pharisee.

Now it would be wrong to suppose for one moment that Antisthenes, who at Cynosages (whence some say the name of the sect) founded this school of philosophy, intended it to degenerate to what it did. It is not to be regarded, moreover, so much as a sect as an institution for the correction of manners. All vices, say some, in exact opposition to Rochefoucauld's maxim, are disguised virtues; and cynicism was intended first as a protest against frivolous finery, folly, and luxury. This protest is eternal, and is as much needed now as ever. What Antisthenes desired to teach was to subdue the passions, and to inculcate natural and simple manners. The Sybarite who complained that his sleep was broken because a rose-leaf was doubled under him, was precisely the man who was to be mended by this school of behaviour. The Cynic was not only haughty in manner from his contempt of the effeminate fools and fops around him, but he was simple in his diet, plain in his clothes, patient in his endurance of hunger, cold, and outward evils. In all this he was right: and so long as he adhered to this simple rule, the rough philosopher by his example benefited his kind.

But it is a rule in this world that good turns to evil. Simplicity and the calmness of devotion turn, on the one

hand, to a bare carelessness ; and, on the other, when connected to a formal and showy, and therefore vicious ritualism. So cynicism quickly became coarse, rude, contemptuous and overbearing, and in fact worse than the evils it affected to cure. When Diogenes threw away his wooden bowl because he found that he could drink from the hollow of his hand, he was teaching a valuable lesson by an extreme example. We were not to hamper ourselves with unnatural furniture or luggage in going through the world. When visited by Alexander, who, flushed with conquest, condescended to ask what he could do for him, the Cynic replied, 'Merely get out of my sunshine,' feeling that he was as great as the swaggering captain in his clinking arms, his nodding plumes, gold helmet and glittering sword ; but when, going into the house of Plato, he disfigures the marble floor with his dirty sandals, bemires his couch, and cries out, 'Thus do I trample on the pride of Plato,' we feel that the nobler philosopher was right in answering, 'And with greater pride, O Diogenes !' Cynicism soon fell in Greece into contempt, the rigorous habits became absurdly ascetic, men punished their 'vile bodies' for nothing, and neglected science merely to cultivate virtue. We had the mediæval history of the monks and ascetics acted hundreds of years before the monks lived. Then scandal opened her mouth, and the grossest tales were told concerning the sect, and the history was acted out ; the sect

died; but, as we all know, the motive or impulse remains.

There is a great deal of modern cynicism about, of that feeling which if it does not arise from mere ill-nature very soon culminates in it. Young men and boys—and we here mean by young men those below thirty—find it so easy to sneer, that they frequently are delighted to take up the habit. And to all, this disposition is so hateful, that everyone will agree with Milton's definition, when he says that 'A beardless cynic is the shame of nature.' And yet we see this beardless cynicism everywhere. Certain successful reviews and newspapers, to which it would be folly to deny much talent, but the merits of which are vastly exaggerated by their success, have introduced the fashion of sneering at everything. Every author is found to be much lower in merit than his critic, every poem is commonplace, every preacher is dull and twaddling, every musician a copyist, every painter a mannerist, and so on.

And there is a certain amount of truth in all this, as no poem is, nor by any possibility can be perfect; neither is any picture original, nor any preacher uniformly interesting. As there must be an element of weakness in all our best human work, we should concede to the ill-natured critic small praise; but there the matter ends. It is his business not to find defects only, but to point out merits; ugliness is no doubt often to be pointed out,

but so surely is beauty to be recognised ; nor is the man who lowers another by caustic and ill-natured criticism to be thought as clever as the man whom he lowers. It is a very old remark that we can find fault where we cannot mend the fault, nor even do so well as the person we blame : this consideration, carried too far, would stop the mouths of all critics save the masters of the art. And these we know to be kind and generous ; it is from the young and inexperienced that the author or painter gets the most cruelty. To be dashing, powerful, brilliant ; to hit hard to show how strong they are ; all this is the chief ambition of young critics : and as they treat humanity badly they in self-defence become cynical. Of course it is very bad to hit a defenceless man a cowardly blow ; but then it may be said, ingenuously, he deserved it ; all men are rogues, and rogues deserve to be punished ; *ergo*, this man has his deserts.

Satisfied with this easy and logical demonstration, though upon the somewhat illogical method of proving a particular case by a general instance, the young cynic proceeds. Happily, let us hope, he being young, will improve, for there is nothing which proves a generous nature so much as the fact that as it grows older it ripens and becomes agreeable. The fine ribstone pippin gets mellow in the Autumn, and more mellow and kindly in the Winter ; nay, it will be sound at the core when old, and the blossoms of its parent tree are blooming into a

fuller maturity. But the cynical crab will turn your teeth in its young days, and will grow rotten ere it be well ripe. So, too, the generous man—he who has considered nature, and knows from experience that perfection is unattainable, and that it is well to welcome even the imperfect and the unready—will grow kinder and more generous every day. How often does such a one link himself by love to all around him, and hide in his own breast the faults of others, rather than establish a spurious reputation by pointing them out!

The present age is, as we have said, cynical. We began by pointing out the snobberies and shams of others; we distrusted admirable Crichtons: and, with Carlyle, began with calling our brother-men wind-bags. We do not believe in peerages, and have long known that the motto *Noblesse oblige* is a false one. We believe, or affect to believe, that money can buy everything, that all praiseful criticisms are written to order, that all show is mere gilt gingerbread, and that everybody keeps a desperately ugly muggersome skeleton in his closet; nay, he may have half a dozen for that matter. Thackeray taught our young fellows to go up to every idol and tap it, and cry out, 'Oh, how hollow you are!' He taught us, and he did it sometimes with an affected kindness, that everybody is a 'snob;' that is, a hypocrite. He even wrote a History of 'Snobs,' and rightly described its author as 'one of themselves.' The great house in

the country and the small lodging in town were alike covered, in his eyes, with that shiny and thin veneer and artificial polish which hide all cracks. But to the cynical eye these cracks are of course visible enough.

The young cynic of eighteen or twenty, taught by clever, sneering Mr. Thackeray, can approach any young couple and say, 'Ah, you unhappy snobs, *I* know it all; you are very polite to her now, Monsieur Mari, but you know you pinch her when alone; and you, you little blooming hypocrite, you, Madame Femme, how you defer to your husband, you can't stir a step without him, can't you; oh no! Ugh! how you pout and scream and frown and flout at him when at home! Ah! poor fellow; who would be a husband?' And so the cynical snob goes on. He will infer to a clergyman, or, let us say, a moral author, that it is easier to preach than to practise, and that no one is better than he should be; and this general kind of truth hits both hard enough, and the better men they are the harder it hits them, because they are conscious of shortcomings, although of a very different nature from those which the cynic dreams of. If anyone, for instance, had told St. Paul or the author whom we call Thomas à Kempis that he was a wretch, a sinner, a fool, the good man would have remorsefully acknowledged it. Hence the power of cynicism: it is harmless on bad men, but it hurts the tender-hearted and the good.

Moreover, cynicism is essentially false. The little snob whom we have pictured has perhaps no idea that he is utterly wrong in just as many instances as he is right. Fifty husbands out of a hundred are as fond as their natures will permit of their wives; the percentage that die broken-hearted, or that are never the same again after the death of the wife is a very large one. The comfortable and equable love at home is often a thousand times more demonstrative than Mr. Cynic can see abroad. A good, manly husband is much more likely to kiss his wife when alone, than when in company; and quite as large a number of wives absolutely idolise their husbands, and feel miserable without their aid and presence. The most beautiful epitaph of Sir Henry Wotton (we thank his Shade that he has written it) is perfectly realised, with a pleasantly-sad frequency, in England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, and other husband and wife-loving countries—

> He first deceas'd; she for a little tri'd
> To live without him, lik'd it not, and di'd.

Is it not as beautiful as it is quaint? It was written upon the death of the wife of Sir Albertus Morton, an admirable gentleman, as another of Wotton's pieces will testify: '*Tears at the grave of Sir* Albertus Morton (*who was buried at* Southampton) *wept by Sir* H. Wotton.'

But is he gone ? and live I Rhyming here,
As if some Muse would listen to my Lay,
When all distun'd sit wailing for their Dear,
And bathe the Banks where he was wont to play.

Dwell thou in endless Light, dischargèd Soul ;
Freed now from Nature's and from Fortune's trust :
While on this fluent Globe my Glass shall roul,
And run the rest of my remaining dust.

It is a pity we have not a popular edition of the works from 'the curious pencil of that ever memorable Sir Henry Wotton, K^t.' as he is called on the title-page of the *Reliquiæ Wottonianæ*. It speaks of his 'Incomparable pieces of Language and Art,' and certainly his 'Character of a Happy Life,' happily quoted in defence of Queen Victoria by the Rt. Hon. Robert Lowe, his fishing song preserved by Walton, his verses on Chidick (*sic*) Tichborne in the Tower, and his epigrams deserve the epithet. Chiefly we thank him for the most tender epitaph in the English language, and at the same time the highest praise of marriage.

To sneer at married life is, then, very easy; but, like most easy things, it is not worth much. It is easy to praise, very easy to blame; the hard task is to do both justly, and to withhold the last if unjust. A cynical temper is no proof of talent : it proves greenness and want of experience, or it argues ill-health and little ease in the mind. Boys who are unsettled in life; young geniuses who would be Lord Byrons; persons who, with upcurled

noses, can say, 'Ha, ha! what is man? he is but a worm of the hour: what is woman? "frailty, thy name is woman;"'—girls who think that man is inconstant ever, and who wait for the beautiful Ideal to turn up—such persons are cynics, but it is a dangerous game to play. We are not all young Hamlets or Byrons. If we indulge in it too much, we shall fall into a vile arrogancy, a dangerous conceit. A wiser estimate of his fellows is taken by the kindest, softest, yet most manly, the most pregnant, powerful, knowing, and trenchant intellect that ever lived—who never once stooped to be cynical nor to sneer—when he says, 'What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god!' Surely the lowest specimen of a being so described, and described truly, is worth more than the curl of a boy's lip, the elevation of a turn-up nose, and the meagre salutation of a sneer.

CHAPTER XVI.

TOO-GOOD PEOPLE.

CHAPTER XVI.

Saints—The Apostles not Saints in a modern sense—Hood's Lines—The Religiosus—Narrowing forms—Cowper—Confucius—Buddha—Stylites—Self-sacrifice.

DID a history of mistaken words exist, surely the word 'saint' would hold a chief place in it. It means much more and it means much less than people put to its account. In one sect of the Church, nay, in two (for the Roman and the Greek Christians have much reverence for saints), the word means little less than a *Deus Minor* or demi-god. Indeed, the invocation and worship of saints anticipate the judgment of God by the judgment of the Pope and the Church, which, by a canonisation legally conducted, places a man side by side with Christ, and makes him at the least a semi-mediator and quasi demi-god in the troops of the blessed. It is needless to refer the Pope—

as did the patriarch of Constantinople—to the Scriptures, to prove that there is no tittle, no, not the shadow of a shade of evidence in favour of saint worship or saint invocation. The Roman Church has found the belief therein too profitable. Paul and Barnabas, while performing miracles at Lystra, so smote the hearts of the people that they would have worshipped them had not the ministers of Christ rent their clothes and cast dust upon their heads,[1] and run in upon the people, crying out, 'Sirs, why do ye these things? We, also, are men of like passions with you.' And yet people are enjoined to put up prayers to these saints, *dead*, who, did they live, would think all such blasphemy! Or, again, to make the logical inference stronger, Paul and Barnabas, corrupt and living on earth, refused to be worshipped or invoked; but incorrupt and living in heaven, permit the dreadful sacrilege, because they are saints. Here, then, is one source of misapprehension. If Saint Paul, *i.e.*, *sanctus Paulus*, the blessed Paul is a demi-god, we do not wonder at the Protestant or Bible Christian hating the name; nor

[1] A sign of the intense horror with which these devout Christian-Jews beheld anything like idolatry or man-worship. It would have been thought impossible to mark awe-full disapprobation in a stronger way; but the Book of Revelation affords a stronger instance. St. John wishes to fall at the feet and worship the angel of the Lord, and he is immediately and severely rebuked—'See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship GOD.' Apocalypse, xix. 10.

do we, on the other hand, wonder at the world hating the name, and attaching to it a very different meaning from that which it probably bears.

Of the division and dissension between the world and the Church we have before spoken. The dissension is very ridiculous; for the Church was ordained for the world—for this world, most certainly, as well as the next. 'Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.' But if the Church has pretended to be afraid of the world, the world, on the other hand, has been disgusted with the Church. That has had its experience, and has grown sick of saints. 'Saint' has, since Cromwell's time, been a cant word and a phrase of desperate meaning; desperate and desperately unpleasant too. 'I am not a saint,' wrote Thomas Hood—

> Not one of those self-constituted saints,
> Quacks, not physicians, in the cure of souls;
> Censors, who sniff out mortal taints,
> And call the Devil over his own coals;
> Those pseudo Privy Councillors of God
> Who wrote down judgments with a pen hard-nibb'd.

And yet this very poem, disfigured in one or two places by harshness and bad taste though it be, entitles Hood to the true appellation. He is a saint now, as we humbly believe, and was a saint on earth, sorely tried, but sanctified by his baptism and his faith, and owning his weakness when he

> Knelt down remote upon the simple sod,
> And sued *in formâ pauperis* to God !

And yet such has been for a long time the narrowness of feeling on both sides that Hood would have resented as an insult the application of the name to him ; and the people of any church and of all churches would, at the same time, have cast out the gentle professor of literature as a Bohemian, as far removed from the right kind of professor as the publican was from the Pharisee.

The modern meaning of 'saint' is to the world something very objectionable, to religious people themselves a sneer and a scoff; but they are chiefly to blame for this. The Roman Catholic Church has proved itself non-Catholic, *i.e.*, opposite from universal faith, by its narrowing the very tongue it speaks. Thus, in the 'De Imitatione Christi' of Thomas à Kempis, the very spirit of which is Roman Catholic, '*bonus religiosus*,' a good, religious man, means a good monk. And in little books in French, pious tracts, published '*par une religieuse*,' these words mean by a nun. Even in England the same narrowing and essentially ungrammatical and ignorant process goes on. Messrs. Longmans have lately published a record of Conventual Life, '*By a Religious*'! A religious what? asks a grammarian, or any plain scholar not accustomed to such a phrase. The adjective is turned into a noun, as *sanctus* has been. A 'religious' means merely a man or woman of a religious order. A, B, C, D, who are merely

men and women, dare not assume that they are religious in the cant phrase of the Church. The word only means those who have bound themselves by vows. People who undertake

> Sufferings Scripture nowhere recommends,
> Devised by SELF to answer selfish ends,

are, according to this misplaced and untaught zeal, only 'religious' and 'saints.' 'Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this,' says the Apostle, 'to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep one's self unspotted from the world.' Yes; but it means that you must earn your own living, do your own work, and not shut yourself up in a box. What a fool is a man to think that he can shut out the world, when it lies so closely nestling to his heart!

Protestant 'religious' are almost as bad as the wearers of black habits, scapularies, and rows of beads. Indeed, the latter, with their noble vow of poverty, their real contempt of personal riches, and one or two other points, go far beyond our selfish, narrow, 'religious' people. Hogarth draws a picture of such a pinched-up, vinegar damsel of fifty going to church in the snow, and dragging behind her a miserable page boy to carry her prayer-book; and on this Cowper has written some forcible lines:—

> She, half an angel in her own account,
> Doubts not hereafter with the Saints to mount,
> Though not a grace appears in strictest search,
> But that she fasts, and item, goes to church.

And the picture has become famous because it is so true. But surely these self-elected people have no claim to their great pretence. Is there no holiness, no sanctity in continual work, to which most of our poor people are bound—work unremitting, and too often unrewarded? Is there nothing blessed in the wearing of a perpetual good-nature and cheerfulness which we see some brave men do, so strong indeed that wherever they come they bring sunshine into the room? Is there then nothing holy in a mother's patient love, nothing in pain quietly endured, watchings often undertaken, sorrows nobly repressed, and the poor heart which sighs for sunshine, for some deep comfort and some happy days, reproved and kept down till it beats in submission to an iron fate? Is there no faith in the toiling father's love, who sees himself, as years fall on him, growing old, unnoticed, and unknown—who waits patiently to see the sunrise of his children's fortunes —who is content to be ignorant that they may be learned, starved that they may be fed, soiled and dirty that they may be neat and clean—and who brings them to the Sunday school, satisfied to be almost a heathen that they may catch upon their upturned brows some of the cherished grace of Christ? Is there nothing to be said of these? Oh, what selfish people we of the middle and richer classes are! Talk about heroes! Yes, I am a fine hero, I am! when that poor man who weeds the garden, or that pale-faced, bent form who mends my shoes,

undergoes, without a murmur, more denials in a week than I do in a year, and with more humility submits to God. 'The night is far spent, the day is at hand;' it is time to break in pieces some of these old shams, time to vindicate the good of all people and all faiths, time to cry out to the lowly and abased, 'Friends, come up higher;' or, better still, to get down from our pedestals ourselves, and stand below the salt, no higher than our own deeds have raised us.

But, in the first place, we will try to raise the lowly. We cannot find fault with the word 'saint.' There are saints and there are sinners; Heaven knows that. But a man who does his plain duty is a saint, and perhaps a man who attempts to do more is a fool. What right have we to make the way of life hard to thousands by creating an artificial goodness which is no goodness at all? The disciples of Buddha and of Confucius run into the same follies as the disciples of the truth; and it is permitted to us who are outside of those 'religious' to freely express our opinions of them. There is a class of devotees, then, which devotes itself to awful torments under the notion that it will please Buddha. Thus, to please a god is a low, villainous, and sneaking notion, which, if applied to an earthly king, would be revolting, but which, by a common perversion of intellect, is allowed to be used towards the All-wise Eternal. These rascally low Buddhists then, place hooks in the muscles of their backs, and are whirled

round like boys whirl transfixed cockchafers, until they faint through sickness and loss of blood. They whip themselves with scourges; they kneel till their knees and backs are stiff; they clasp their hands till the nails grow through the back; they hold themselves crosswise until their joints stiffen into that fashion; and they are venerated by others as miracles of piety, and they count themselves sure of heaven, having purchased it by self-imposed tortures. So the priests of Baal cut themselves with knives, and shed their own blood before their implacable divinity, believing that he delighted in cruelty, and that his nostrils dilated at the scent of human blood—that blood which the Creator has formed so wonderfully, that life which He has hedged round with a thousand instincts, and which is, if we read His book of nature only, so precious in His eyes.

These, then, are the Buddhist saints; what shall we say of them?

The good people of China, who follow the wise Confucius, place around goodness almost as many exclusive rules as do the priests of Buddha. It would be tiresome to give the rules which Confucius himself laid down as necessary to be observed, to show proper respect for the emperor, whom he held, scarcely believing in an active and omnipotent God, to be the representative of authority. One, however, was to bow down, to cover the face, to enter the presence with lowliest thoughts, to rub the forehead on the dust, and to humiliate oneself outwardly,

and in the heart to show respect for the Great One. 'When summoned to an audience with the prince,' says a recent writer, 'he ascends the daïs, holding up his robe with both his hands, his body bent, and he holds his breath as if he dared not breathe. When he is carrying the sceptre of his prince, he seems to bend his body as if he were overwhelmed with its weight. His countenance seems to change and look apprehensive, and he drags his feet as if they are held by something to the ground.'

These, then, are the ways by which men, under some degrading snare of the tempter, and acting from a debased symbolism, seek to please the All-seeing and the All-wise. From a distorted and unwise selfishness, from a desire to save self and to save nobody else, these self-elected saints laid burdens on themselves which God never laid, put stumbling-blocks in their brothers' way, bent the form created after God's own image, denied themselves the kindly pleasures of life and the kindly fruits of the earth, have quenched wholesome desires, which God created, expelled wholesome love, which God gave, and dwarfed down the huge amplitude of life, whose circle is the whole world, to the narrow top of a pillar three feet in diameter. Yes, upon a pillar of gradually increased heights, one of the Stylites, or pillar-saints (for there were many—three famous ones, Simeon, Julian, and Daniel), spent fifty years of his life praying so many times a day that it is impossible to count how many prayers he

said; and this man, Theodoret would have us believe, is *the blessed Simeon*, chosen by God from his birth to study how to obey and to please Him.' This is he of whom Tennyson writes, making him cry out thus :—

> Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty God,
> This not be all in vain, that thrice ten years,
> Thrice multiplied by superhuman pangs,
> In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and colds,
> In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous throes, and cramps,
> A sign between the meadow and the cloud.
> Patient, on this tall pillar, I have borne
> Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp, and sleet and snow.

And then, introduced with admirable art, the poet suggests the reason why St. Simeon Stylites did this :—

> And I had hoped that ere this period closed
> Thou wouldst have caught me up into Thy rest,
> Denying not these weather-beaten limbs
> The meed of saints, the white robe and the palm.

If so persistent a madman as that ever gets crowned with a greater glory than can fall to the lot of any earthly monarch; if he be permitted to let blaze in heaven that latent pride which urged him on earth to strive to take the kingdom of God by violence, and to be a captain-general of self-immolated saints, Heaven will be different from that which the New Testament pictures to us. At the bottom of this intense madness was a selfishness as intense; and it is notorious, as Gibbon has well pointed out, that when saintship pays and offers a lazy life,

surrounding the saint with respectful devotees, daily offerings, wonderings, and even prayers, an immense number of the vain, the lazy, and the blindly proud become devout. When saintship includes daily work in daily obscurity, poverty, hunger, and dirt—all undertaken and put up with from a sense of duty ; when it calls for heroism without the medal and the crown, with no gazette to publish the victory ; for martyrdom without the palm, the white robe, and the flame of fire playing round the head—there are not so many people fond of 'playing' at saints. If we look upon the world reasonably and with a dispassionate eye, it will be hard for us to point out any one class which has done true religion more harm than these false saints. An author of much merit asserts that Bunyan's *Pilgrim* is a monster of selfishness because he leaves his wife and children and only thinks of self-salvation. 'What shall *I* do to be saved?' This is far too narrow a view to be taken of that work of supreme genius and of deep tenderness, but it needs very little penetration to see that the goodness of some persons is merely a sublimed selfishness, that they really do speculate as it were in the heavenly funds, and think only of themselves. St. Paul, who would have been content to be lost so that others might be saved, is not unaware of this secret and bosom sin, and trembles lest, having preached to others, he himself 'might be a castaway.' Blind to this insight, some modern saints wear

a self-complacent gloss upon their faces which is positively sickening.

Thank God the ages of saint and saintdom are well-nigh over, and that there remains to us the harder duty of fulfilling the behests of a reasonable religion, and of worshipping the true God 'unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid;' and what He requires we know. It is not for us to circumscribe our path to the top of a pillar smaller than a drawing-room table; it is not for us merely to bury that talent He has given us, but to put it out to interest to do good, not to ourselves and our own souls only, but to those of others; or, instead of being saints, we shall find ourselves miserable sinners indeed.

CHAPTER XVII.

LITTLE TRIALS.

CHAPTER XVII.

Small trials—Tom Brown on prosperity—Man really dust—Elizabethan satirists—The grand style—Easy trials—The small ones that wear us out.

'WELL,' wrote the facetious but often wise Tom Brown, in his 'New Maxims of Conversation,' 'this thing call'd Prosperity makes a Man strangely insolent and forgetful. How contemptibly a Cutler looks at a poor Grinder of Knives; a Physician in a coach at a Farrier a-foot; and a well-known *Paul's Church-yard* bookseller upon one of the trade that sells second-hand books under the trees in *Morefields!*'

We have used the capitals and italics of the facetious Mr. Thomas Brown, so as to put before the reader his own style, and to recall the time of his writing. The observation is as old as the hills: it is very trite and

commonplace. No doubt everybody knows it; but Truth has a fashion of being very old, while we have a fashion of forgetting it; so if a writer recalls old truths in a pleasant, genial style, he is doing good. As regards trifles and little things, everything has been said that can be said. 'Sands form a mountain!' 'moments make a year.' Everything in the world depends on atoms; and so well convinced are all of us of this, that it would be waste of time to go over any instances. We are all atomical; nay, Chemistry will tell us that we are less than atoms: we are gases and vapours. Proud man is less than dust: he is a breath. His life is not worth a pin's fee: he may be deprived of it by a hair in a draught of milk, a grape-stone in a cup of wine, a grain of sand, which, Pascal tells us, caused the death of Cromwell, or a tin tack in a basin of soup, with which a year or two ago a London merchant was 'done to death.' We march upon graves: the very dust we tread upon once lived; nay, we feed upon our ancestors. The sheep that we eat may have cropped grass grown on the graves of our grandsires. The atoms of lime that enter into the composition of our bones may have filtered through water which passes through the battle graveyards of our Saxon and Norman progenitors.

Trifles we are, and trifles disturb us. In the midst of prosperity, when the cutler is indeed looking down on the knife-grinder, a speck of dust in his eye will worry

him, and take away the force of his proud looks. As a beau, in the days of the Regency, passed along the Old Palace Yard to one of the brilliant balls given by the Prince of Wales, he was rendered wretched for the whole evening by a mud-splash on his white silk stocking. The great author of a thousand good things, the man whose novel is sure to get praised in the 'Daily Jupiter,' and of whom the reviews always speak well, is ready to burst with envy when one whom he has patronised and despised rises, *per saltum*, over his head, and becomes a bright star in the firmament of literature. The first author, A, is the same—just as witty, just as clever, just as good; why should he fret at B? Why should the fairest belle of the ball-room, who enjoyed the dance, and was the admiration of all, be jealous of the darkest beauty to whom all eyes are turned? This trifling jealousy, so native to the hearts of authors, artists, and women—and, in good truth, women are the most strong-minded and the noblest of the three—is laughable to the world, but exceedingly hurtful to themselves.

Looking up to Shakspeare as we do, it is lucky for him that ignorance of all his life-doings has kept from us the envying, hatred, back-biting, lying, and slandering to which he must have been subjected, and which, perhaps, he felt and gave vent to. Thank Heaven, we do not *know* that he did. We know that Ben Jonson gave one or two spiteful things among the many noble ones he said

of him ; we know, too, that one of his fellows calls him a great *Shake-scene*, and puns, in an ill-natured, spiteful way, upon his furnishing whole *Hamlets* of plays ; but we do not know that Shakspeare uttered one ill-natured word in return. Now, of Ben Jonson and Dekker we read the quarrels. 'Ben,' said Drummond, 'was a great lover and praiser of himself; a condemner and scorner of others ; given rather to lose a friend than a jest ; jealous of every word and action of those about him.' Such a man could well attack Marston and Dekker in the 'Poetaster,' and the last could well return the abuse in 'Satiromastix.' And yet these men were poets and true teachers—the very cream of the cream of the wits of the day ! Were we any better in Pope's time? Dryden, his great master, had a life embittered by petty silly attacks, which drew from him such tremendous satire, that it seems to have done all in that way that could have been done ; but, alas ! what an occupation for a great intellect ! And Pope—so early wise, so neat, so clever, so pure, so brilliant, so full of point and epigram—Pope, too, could devote his powerful intellect to the abuse of women ; could vent spite like an angry cat, and absolutely deserve the rebuff, cruel though it was, of Lord Hervey and Lady M. W. Montagu : 'Is this the *thing* to keep mankind in awe—

> If limbs unbroken, skin without a stain,
> Unwhipped, unblanketed, unkick'd, unslain,
> That wretched little carcase you retain—

it is only because you are like a note of interrogation, a crooked little thing that asks impertinent questions.' Such, in effect, is the answer that these people give to a great, good, and on the whole a tender-hearted man. Is the spectacle an improving one? Would it not have been better that all the private life of Pope and Goldsmith, and Jonson and Dryden, had been buried for ever in oblivion?

Sometimes it may console us to reflect, when we have yielded to such petty annoyances, that greater men than we have been as weak. But this is but a poor consolation. It consoles us to think that great men have lived who have been reviled, and reviled not again; whose lives have been as calm as heaven, and whose souls almost as pure; rather than to imagine that we are all so little that a small annoyance like a grain of sand will wear away and injure alike the finest mechanism of the mind or the watch. A good armour against little troubles is furnished by selfishness and conceit. A thick skin does not care for a scratch, and there are some men so dull of comprehension of anything against themselves that they can bear unmoved the satire of a Dryden or the invective of a Gifford. But this kind of defence is not to be envied: it is certainly the thickness of skin of the hog or the jackass, but it unfortunately carries with it the stupidity and selfishness of those animals. A better is in an immeasurable and, if possible, a well-founded opinion of oneself, such

as had the brave Prince Maurice, as a capital anecdote will testify: 'And whom do you consider, Prince,' said a gentleman to him one day, 'the best soldier in Europe?' —'I won't say who is the best,' replied the Prince, 'but the Marquis de Spinola is the *second* best general I know'—a delicate and pointed hint as to his own merits. Such a man could have heard the praises of a rival sung without hurting him; whereas Napoleon the Great absolutely detracted from the merits of his bravest marshals, and was as jealous of fame as a woman or a poet; and Oliver Goldsmith (who, could he have foreseen his fame and influence, how wise and good he has made thousands, how he has entered into the hearts of young and old, would surely have been content) used to fume and fret, nay, would ridiculously interrupt the company when he found the praises and attention lavished on his friend, Doctor Johnson, were too strong for his jealous heart.

Yes, indeed, those are little troubles which arise from envy, hatred, and malice; but they are hard to be borne. There are other little troubles in life which are merely annoying, but the constant recurrence of which, like the constant dropping of water, will wear away the best tempers if we do not make head against them.

At the beginning of this century Beresford published his well-known, clever, and amusing little book on the 'Miseries of Human Life.' These he treats of in various dialogues; and, but that the fashion of the wit is

somewhat antiquated—for although it is not sixty years old, it is much more *old-fashioned* than the wit of Horace or of Shakspeare—the book is most amusing still. He makes miseries of everything: of watering-places whereto people go for health; of dinners which they give for pleasure; of coaches, of horses, of rowing, sailing, riding, or driving; of travelling, of inns, of sleeping in strange beds, of sporting, of London, of reading and writing, and the public press, and a thousand other things. The effect of the book was, no doubt, wholesome. The old gentleman who gives these lectures to his son and wife, and his friend Mr. Sensitive, is one Mr. Testy, senior; and his manners, of course depicted in a very 'fat' manner, as the painters say—that is, with gross exaggeration—are just as farcically absurd as the manners of the conventional old-comedy father or tyrant uncle are on the stage. Let us imagine a man who, when a candle is insufficiently extinguished, and, as he says, 'smells under his nose,' opens the window, and throws candle and candlestick into the street; who flies into a rage because he has to mount up fifty stairs to go to bed; and who thinks it a rare 'misery' if he wishes to spend his holiday at Brighton, and he finds the town so full that he is obliged to go to Ramsgate, although both towns were then nearly equal in fashion. Mr. Testy calls his objurgations and complainings against fortune 'groans;' and if we cultivate our capacity for groaning in this way, we

don't know how much of that kind of noise we may make in this world.

About ten years ago the French followed up this book by a volume on the same subject, 'Les petites Misères de la Vie humaine,' and, in point of artistic illustration, improved on Mr. Beresford's work, while they fell short of him in dry wit and humour. But if there were a whole library of books on the subject, the facts would not be one whit altered with regard to them: they are—(1) That little troubles are, on the whole, much less well borne than the greater ones. (2) That great ones drive them away, and that upon the pinch of any real necessity they disappear. (3) That people well to do, and in what is called 'comfortable circumstances,' suffer most from them; and this must follow No. 2, since real troubles, or a great trouble, serve all the little ones like Aaron's rod did the rods of the Egyptian sorcerers when turned into serpents—*i.e.*, they swallow them all up.

How much soever wise people have insisted upon the importance of trifles, there is this much certain, that if we pay too much attention to them, we become little in ourselves, and incapable of great actions. The drill-sergeant is a very fine fellow, and no doubt can see that the goose step is well done; that the men 'dress' well, and fall into fours with promptitude and level exactness; but he will hardly do to command an army, or to set a brigade in motion. So he who attends always to minute

details may be a very concise and polite man, but he never will be fit to grasp large and wide measures: he may do for Usher of the Black Rod, but not for Prime Minister. He may tell you how a bill is to be introduced, and how the matter is debated, but he will hardly hit out a grand scheme which will affect mankind. Thackeray once wrote—and we have seen the sentence applied to trifles—that the 'great moments of life are but moments like the others. Your doom is spoken in a word or two. A single look from the eyes, a pressure from the hand, may decide it; or of the lips, though they cannot speak.'

The above is very true, but it hardly proves that those moments are trifles. It is a very good argument against the sensational school. Great matters do not always go off with a bang. It is wonderful in what a common-place way a judge will condemn a man to death, and a murderer will, with a smile on his face, say, 'Thank you, my lord,' and walk away to his doom. These are but simple actions, yet they are not trifles. They may be compared to great troubles borne lightly, not to little troubles borne gravely: if we once begin to bear our little troubles gravely, we shall find that our life will be henceforward one of misery. If we choose to make a mountain of a mole-hill, we shall find plenty of mole-hills to build a perfect Alpine or Himalayan chain. Two people—if they but like to set about it in an artistic way—will be quite sufficient to make as many little troubles and

miseries as one can desire. A man and his wife, if they only determine to plague each other—if the wife will hate what the husband likes, and the husband will fret at what the wife wears, says, and does—will have such a crop of little miseries about them, that, if they reap all day, they will not be able to harvest them.

But the brave and true man and woman will go through life putting aside these little troubles, just as a gliding ship does the ripple of salt and yesty bubbles at its prow. Let the cares and anxieties, the worries and little troubles of life, grow up about our seed of truth, and we know the result—the corn will be choked, and never bring forth. But if we determine to bear a calm temper, to be thankful and enjoy the good we have, to look at the wife that God has given us as the most fit for us, and our friends and children as the best (under the circumstances); to believe that a Providence wiser than ourselves has put us in our true and best position; if, moreover, we try and think humbly of ourselves, we shall find that little troubles will cease to annoy us, that trifles cannot hurt us any more than a gnat can sting a rhinoceros; nay, moreover, that our stock of annoyances will no more grow in our bosoms than weeds will spring up in a gravel walk after it has been well sprinkled with acid and sown with salt.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OF HARD WORK.

CHAPTER XVIII.

County Families—Pride—A Warrior class—Dignity of Labour—Non-workers unhappy—The curse a blessing—The brave Man—The blessings of Work.

IN the country, where people think differently from those in great towns, the head of the family—an old family, whose head long years ago has been the carver at the table of a king—lives in glory as chief of one of the county families. A clever scion of the same, educated as a doctor, becomes a learned man, rescues, let us say, in the course of a useful life, a thousand or five hundred of his fellow-creatures from death, and heals and comforts thousands. Thereby he grows rich, and retires with his ample fortune to enjoy himself, and to bask within the prospect of the old house. Quite right, too, you say; honoured and

dignified by the good he has done, this man should spend a happy old age. But there are mortifications to pride in the country, of which the town man knows nothing. Our friend the doctor is patronised himself in 'an awful way,' and he, with the ladies of his family, are *not* invited to mix with the ladies of the 'county' family. Well, but you cry, they are all of the same flesh and blood. Ay, ay, sir; but county prejudice looks down upon a doctor.

Do we want any more illustrations of pride, of its cruelty, senselessness, and miserable emptiness? You rail against it yourself, and yet encourage it. That which is exhibited in the baronet's family is copied in his servants' hall. The butler and upper servants are very severe and exclusive with the kitchen servants; while, to carry the matter thoroughly out, the kitchen totally overlooks the scullery. The 'gentleman out of livery,' a kind of valet, a representative of our old yeoman of the body-guard, has nothing to do with the gay gentleman who wears livery, who, in his turn, looks down with a lofty disdain on the stable-help. So Theodore, the splendidly proud King of Abyssinia, kept around him a number of courtiers, each of whom, in savage pride, despised the other, while the king, at the top, despised them all.

How much soever in uncivilized society the warrior class boasts itself, this hatred and contempt of labour, and of money earned by labour, is out of place. It is dying out somewhat; that is, so far as it ever can die

out ; and when a noble family wants money, it can form a connection with a newly rich man. If it were anything but pride it would be a good thing, for it is not well to be friendly with a man who has blackened his soul by advertising lies, poisoning our minds with deleterious literature, or our bodies with bad drugs. But Pride never discriminates ; it always licks the dust. When it wants money, it bends to all sorts of knaves and fools ; when it has plenty, it insults worthy men. Moreover, granted that a nobleman in England is the flower of the human race, that he has yet the pride of the *haute noblesse* upon him, that he represents (which, in nine cases out of ten, he does not) really old blood and gentle culture, that he is a peer of the most powerful Queen in the world,—a Queen over the third of the human race,—that he has ancestral parks, houses, fields, and beautiful domains, he must yet own that all this is only rendered possible by the labour of those below him. Poets have first imaged, then philosophers described, then inventors thought out, then lawyers propounded and made safe ; then the artizan manufactured and the soldier protected all that makes life dear, all that renders us different from Abyssinia, and our country a much more easy prey to the foreign foe. And where would my lord have been but for those common men, Drake, Frobisher, and Raleigh, Duncan, Howe, Jervis, Nelson, to say nothing of Clive (a common clerk), who gave us India, and the thousands who every day

make England what it is? If our great man reflected as he ought to reflect, he would vail his pride a little. It is not etiquette for a royal duke to shake hands with a subject. Painters (sublime artists, it may be,) are only made knights; the most skilful surgeon in the world merely a baronet. Of Armstrong and Whitworth, whose cannon may save the nation, the one is unhonoured, the other is a mere knight. Mr. Reed, who has reconstructed the Navy, is simply Mr. Reed; Mr. Henry Cole, who has done such immense art service in educating our designers and manufacturers, is only a C.B., has the privilege of wearing a bit of ribbon, in fact; Mr. Tennyson, who is our first poet, who suggests noble thoughts, and gives us noble pleasures, and elevated and grand conceptions, is still plain Mr. Tennyson. Mr. Dickens, who had done wonders for our English literature, and has bound together class with class, had no recognition but that of the public. And these men are high-class labourers—working men, with the brain: nothing more. It is a pity that such a fashion obtains, for of old it was not so. The men who fought were also the men who wrought. It is a curious perversion of the notion of merit that dignity should be attached, not to those who do something, but to those who do nothing. One of the manliest of all our thinkers—Dr. Johnson—was once asked to define a gentleman; and he said bitterly that he was 'one who had no visible means of gaining an honest livelihood.'

The dignity of labour should be insisted upon by all classes. It is, however, so hard to bend the body and the mind to continuous exertions, that although the Almighty is acknowledged to be the All-worker, yet with man, labour has been pronounced as the primal curse. But even then one would think that he who underwent his sentence—and it was the sentence pronounced upon all—was a more worthy man than the do-nothing and the skulk, who feed upon the labour of others. True it is that effort is to some painful; but then it should be remembered that life at its best is not wholly happy. 'A perpetual dream there has been,' wrote Carlyle, 'of Paradises, and some luxurious Lubberland, where the brooks should run wine, and the trees bend with ready-baked viands; *but it was a dream merely, an impossible dream.* Is not labour the inheritance of man? And what labour for the present is joyous and not grievous? Labour, effort, is the very interruption of that ease, which man *foolishly enough fancies* to be his happiness; and yet without labour there were no ease, no rest so much as conceivable. . . . Only in free effort can any blessedness be imagined for us.' Therefore is it that in that curious book, *Sartor Resartus*, the same author declares that there are but 'two men that he honours, and no third:' the one, the toil-worn craftsman, in whose hand, hard, crooked, and coarse, there is yet a 'cunning virtue inde-

feasibly royal;' the second, him who is seen 'toiling for the spiritually indispensable—the bread of life.'

With the labourer, then, and the preacher, this great thinker finds that true nobility alone exists. But society, always at variance with the philosopher, has by its laws set apart another kind of nobility, which lives indeed in a luxurious Lubberland of ease; where brooks do not exactly run wine, but where wine is to be had in a much more commodious way, where the trees do not bend with ready-baked viands, but where all kinds of the most luxurious viands are to be had without the slightest effort on the part of the consumer. No dream of the idle savage ever equalled the reality of the European noble or rich man. Not only has he no necessity to work, but others work willingly for him, and anticipate his every want. Inventors are taxing their busy brains to give more novelty. Poets and scholars are working hard to give him the best result of thought. Sailors go over every sea to bring to him the produce of distant countries; politicians, and those who live by the markets, watch the thoughts and speculations of men and the result of commerce, that thereby he may benefit. If he so choose, he may be absolutely lazy. All that society asks of him is to spend the money that others earn, and that he shall not be either very vicious or absolutely mad. This doer of nothing is a descendant, however, from some one who has done something. His ancestor may

have been of supreme virtue, and have been ennobled; for the idea embodied in an hereditary nobility is at least a pure one—that of rewarding the posterity of the true noble; and, in addition to the amount of ease and luxury provided, society points out this man for especial honour, and gives him a distinctive mark and title, whereby men may know him.

Is this non-labourer, presuming any such there be, absolutely happy? What is the result of this indulgence of society? Truly we find the primal curse on the whole more merciful than man's blessings. These 'precious balms' of society are like those which the Psalmist prays against, that break the head of him upon whom they descend. It is, however, a significant fact of the nobility of England, that they are some of the busiest workers in the land. They lead every movement, they are ever active. In politics, in sport, in benevolence, and in trade, you may pick out many foremost names; but you will always find a nobleman amongst them. They come down to the people, and these in their turn rally round them. It is a common saying that even a charity dinner does not go off well unless there is a lord in the chair to read the reports and to talk the usual platitudes. Indeed it is a common thing to find that noblemen work a great deal harder than many common workpeople. French writers have remarked this, and have urged upon their own aristocracy the necessity for such labour. It must

be apparent to anyone, that the care of a great estate necessitates constant work of some sort. If this work be not undertaken, the family soon goes to ruin. No one can safely trust all his concerns to agents and stewards; and it is in addition to this care that great men undertake public work. Let us take two instances; those of the Earl of Shaftesbury and of the Earl of Derby, —one a philanthropist and the other a statesman; it is probable that few men in the kingdom have led more laborious lives than these. The multiplicity and regularity of their engagements would strike most of us with wonder if they were put before us. The life of Henry, Lord Brougham, an ennobled lawyer, was one of incessant activity; so incessant, indeed, that at the most active period of his life, it is said that he seldom enjoyed more than four hours' sleep out of the twenty-four. Few men, indeed, could possibly work as he did; he, and such as he, must ever form the exception; but ordinarily successful and prominent men of rank are all great workers.

Such men are impelled to work through a necessity in their nature. Work, it is said, protects us from three great evils—poverty, vice, and *ennui*. Let us say that Fortune has rid them of the first fear, she has only done so by making the other two more potent. The idle rich are a prey to both of these: vice, which they foolishly indulge in for lack of employment; *ennui*, or the misery of wanting something to do, which constantly assails

them, or at best only gives place to remorse for having done foolishly. So that labour, after all, is the only wise escape for man.

> 'Tis the primal curse,
> But soften'd into mercy, made the pledge
> Of cheerful days, and nights without a groan.

It is, indeed, not only that which supplies means and food, but supplies health. The man who has plenty to do, is the man who has the blessing of health given him to do it with; and the more he labours the more he loves his work. 'I never heard,' wrote a gentleman, 'of a true labourer ever getting tired of his work. I never heard of an apostle, prophet, or public benefactor, getting tired and giving up.' It is quite true, the more a man *does*, the more he wants to do. And what he does he is proud of. Coke, of Leicestershire, when made a nobleman, was a great deal prouder of the breed of long-woolled sheep, which he had introduced and improved, than he was of his coronet. It is an old saying, but it is a true one, and will be repeated long after this generation of writers and readers is dead, that the bread of idleness is bitter, and the bread earned by honest labour is sweet. Did you ever black your own boots, and not fancy that they were done much better than a servant could have done them? Do you want to make a child relish its food, let it have a hand in making the pie-crust. Buy your bread with your own hard-earned

money, and you will not find it sour, nor will you waste it. 'Oh, doctor, doctor!' cried a sickly, surfeited, gouty patient, to Abernethy, 'what would I not give to get well! What shall I—shall I do?'—'Live on sixpence a-day—*and earn it*,' cried the doctor. Truly, no one could get much gout out of that.

Noble is the worker, chiefly because he cannot work wholly for himself. The man who digs a field of potatoes, who works, and manures the ground, who lays his bones to and paves the street, has laid his fellows under some obligation to him; and those who have been idle, mere consumers of other men's labour, have not repaid him. It is written, indeed, in the Book of God, 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,' and far more plainly in the Book of Nature; but we never find the sentence, 'Thou shalt live by the sweat of other men's brows.' We watched a stalwart paviour the other day looking at a newly-paved road—a marvellous work of granite—for they pave in London better than in any city in the world, though the constant traffic makes its pavements worse: the man's eye rested with a loving glance on the truly-cut and truly-driven blocks of granite; and he, too, rose in dignity as he looked upon his work and pronounced it good. He was more manly, more dignified, more worthy externally, with his swart face and tense muscles, than the silken do-nothing dandy, who trots over that

pavement merely to exercise his limbs, fatigued with doing nothing.

There is another way in which labour is dignified. It keeps men innocent while it makes them useful. 'Hard work,' says Mr. Helps, 'is a great police agent. If everybody worked from morning, and were then carefully locked up, the register of crimes would be greatly diminished.' Rather let us say entirely exhausted. If we could only persuade every person to believe that work of some sort is alone noble, that idleness always degrades, impoverishes, and finally destroys both man and nations, and could thereon urge them to set themselves to some work, how much crime might be avoided!

But we must remember that it is not only work, but good work, that is necessary for us. It is a mistake to suppose that thieves are idle, or that the villain and the fool do not in some way labour. Work they do, in a miserable fashion, and that too for the hardest taskmaster in the world—the devil. Dogged by police, betrayed by their friends, watched and suspected by all, they have indeed hard work, and work that never pays.

Work that does pay is in the long run its own reward; and that which truly pays is not that which amasses the largest heap of gold, but that which acquires for its author the greatest satisfaction. In Schiller's fine 'Ballad of the Brave Man,' the count offers a purse of gold to anyone who will save a family whose lives are endangered on the broken bridge by a roaring torrent. The brave man

plunges into the stream, dashes his boat against the crumbling piles, and rescues the terror-stricken family. All applaud him, and the count throws down to him the purse of gold. 'Give it, sir count,' says the brave man, 'to those who have lost their all; I do not want it: I never put my life against gold.' Such work as this, or any work that is quite truthful, only needs a moderate reward to make a man rich. As a rule, the higher the work the less the reward. Some men indeed work for posterity, and never get paid in this life. Others cannot be rewarded. What patient can thoroughly repay a good doctor who saves his life? What pupil can ever repay an excellent schoolmaster? Who can repay the father and mother who have taught us religion, honesty of purpose, and goodness? Who can repay the writer, who, bending over his desk hour after hour, gives back the sweetness of the flowers of thought that he has plucked, instilling firmness, goodness, faith, and noble thoughts, and amidst a base and degenerating world stands firm and true in his devotion to goodness? All such men are above mere payment. They can afford to let those who live out of the earnings of the industrious grow rich and live in big houses, and be honoured of men, while they will be applauded by an innocent conscience, and seek the reward of the Great Master. Such men indeed are beyond money, and beyond price, and most truly uphold the Dignity of Labour.

CHAPTER XIX.

AN EMPTY REWARD.

CHAPTER XIX.

A Last Infirmity—Different Estimates—Washington—Elizabeth—Raleigh's History—Fame merely Report—Its Emptiness—What True Fame should be.

FAME is a high-sounding word, which has led many astray. It is, says Milton, 'that last infirmity of noble mind;' but whether it be so, or the first health, many seem to doubt. It is one of those passions which seem very pure and very noble at first, but it has led many great men into deplorable crimes, and has caused more widows' tears and orphans' cries than almost any other. Some persons fancy that a love of Fame (Young's 'Universal Passion,' by the way,) should be classed amongst the crimes or the sins of humanity; but this, as in everything else in this world, has its two sides; or rather, like a well-cut dia-

mond, cut in that way which makes it a 'brilliant,' it has many facets, and each of these little faces reflects a different colour. We envy a man who has a fair and an unstained fame, a man of good report; and if we could, like the Athenians of old, we should probably ostracise him; but we pity him of whom Fame speaks evil; and yet one is just as much fame as the other. Jack Sheppard lives in story, while many a noble, virtuous man and woman, many a saint once on earth, and now a saint in Heaven, is unknown and unheard of. Fame is represented as a woman, flying on the wings of the wind, and carrying her own trumpet, and she is capricious in her favours.

> The aspiring youth that fired the Ephesian dome
> Outlives in fame the pious fool that raised it.

So it is: we know the name, which we will not repeat, of him who set fire to the wonder of the world—the Temple of Ephesus; the names of its builders have escaped. So again Fame is very forgetful. We know not whether we call the pyramids by their right names. 'Doting in their antiquity,' says Fuller, in his quaint way, 'they have forgotten the names of their owners.' 'Was Cheops or Chyphrenes architect of either pyramid that bears his name?' asks a poet, with mocking satire. Who knows? We look at a history and it tells us so and so; but soon there comes a man who will re-write that history,

and make it very plain to all of us that we have hitherto known nothing correctly.

There is a rumour abroad that in the India House Library the books belonging to the great Timour have been found; 'and,' says the scribe who carefully notes this, 'such matters have been discovered as will cause the history of Mahomet to be re-written;' and Mahomet may be asserted to be, not the false Mahomet, the dog of a prophet, the idiot, or if not idiot, the dupe, but a great and God-fearing man, whose work has lived for fourteen hundred years, and may live for fourteen hundred more. Horace Walpole re-wrote the 'History of Richard the Third,' and truly the king seems to have been one of the most skilful monarchs we ever had, and certainly as good as nine out of ten of them. Mr. William Longman has re-written the 'History of Edward the Third.' He has brought a few new lights; but he has enabled us to understand how the poor despised English conquered at Cressy, simply by being better armed and having more efficient weapons than their opponents, although the latter were ten to one. Fame has blown her trumpet loudly and often falsely for Richard the Third and Edward the Third. Perhaps when we know more than we do now, some of our heroes will be but images with heads of gold (or brass?) and feet of clay.

Will any historian tell us why Colonel George Washington was unfaithful to his regimental oath, for he was

a soldier on the King's side, and turning against him, wrested half a continent from the British,—a British soldier himself? When the South and North fought, one kind of fame made Stonewall Jackson a hero, another a wretched 'Reb;' and our American cousins did not seem to consider the President of the Southern Republic, who acted far less deceptively with them than Washington did with us, by any means a hero. Was Lafayette a hero, who fought against England and brought revolution into France? How about Cromwell? Is he 'damned to everlasting fame,' or is he the real Puritan King of Men,—the purest, best, wisest, most prayerful, and truly loyal man in the whole range of history? Choose your sides, gentlemen and ladies; or, if you desire another point, settle that little difficulty about Mary, the Queen, and the Queen's Maries. Read John Knox and the ballads of the time (there are some pretty ones even in so popular a book as Scott's 'Minstrelsy');—read the evidence about the murder of Darnley; take Mr. Froude and the State papers as evidence; and a more subtle plotter, cruel, shifty, and worse woman could hardly have lived.

The very coins struck in France (you may see them in Paris or in the British Museum) will prove that Mary laid claim to Elizabeth's dominion; but in reading Miss Strickland we find another kind of Mary, made up of beauty, chastity, tenderness, and misfortune. Sir Walter

Scott paints this lady almost as a persecuted saint, and talks about the 'murderess Elizabeth;' but Walsingham, Elizabeth's prime minister, who, shut in his house, saw the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and the slaughtered Protestants lying in their blood under his window, had another tale to tell.

Let us now look to recent times. At one time no man was more hated than the Duke of Wellington; but Death drew aside the veil, and showed us the true hero. Now no man is more loved. 'Whatever record leap to life, he never shall be shamed,' says the laureate. Can we say the same of many other generals? The will of Napoleon proved that he pensioned the would-be assassin of his great rival, and proved that to be truth, which, when Wellington said it, was put down for mere spite. 'Ah,' said the duke, shaking his head, 'Napoleon was a great general, but he was sometimes a very little man.'

The universal love of fame may be proved by a simple fact; the word having a general meaning, either good or bad, has been universally accepted as good. Chatterton, the poet, wished to be painted as an angel blowing a trumpet, with his own name on it. 'What shall I do, to be for ever known?' asks Schiller; and the question, which he turns to a pretty moral in the verses, instantly attracts everybody. But fame—φήμη, report—is, as we said, either good or bad. Ben Jonson wrote some admirable verses, prefixed to Sir Walter Raleigh's 'History of

the World,' in which he moralises with a weighty manner on the province of history,—

> From Death and dark Oblivion nigh the same,
> The mistress of man's life, grave Historie,
> Raising the world to good or evil fame,
> Doth vindicate it to eternitie.
>
> High Providence would so ; that nor the good
> Might be defrauded, nor the great secured,
> But both might know their ways are understood,
> And the reward and punishment assured.

And there, sure enough, are two figures on the frontispiece, cut by Droeshout, the same who engraved Shakspeare's portrait, both with trumpets. That on the right side is in pure and silver robes, and she is Good Report, *Fama bona* ; while Evil Report, *Fama mala*, stands puffing away with distended cheeks, in a robe covered with black and dishonourable spots, stains on the purity of Fame, marks to be shunned and hated ; and yet there are fools who would rather have a bad fame than none.

Chaucer, following Virgil, has depicted the house of Fame with the many tongues ; and, says Churchill, describing the personification,—

> Her lungs in strength all lungs surpass,
> Like her own trumpet, made of brass ;
> Who, with a hundred pair of wings,
> News from the farthest quarters brings ;
> Sees, hears, and tells, untold before,
> All that she hears—and ten times more.

It follows, as a matter of course, that Fame is a notorious liar. 'Never believe half that you hear,' says one; 'make it a quarter, and you will be more right,' cries another; but liar as she is, she is an arrant coquette to boot. To one man she, like Fortune, gives too much; to no man enough to satisfy him. It has been noted that of authors and writers but a small number deserve fame and have it; some neither have it nor deserve it,—this is a very large class; some, who do not deserve it, yet get it; and others, who really deserve much, get none, or but little. It is the same with clergymen, painters, statesmen, and soldiers; notoriously so with inventors. Amongst them there are dozens who have filched men's ideas and leaped into the newspapers, as it were, like the Irishman who lived for a whole twelvemonth in Dublin on the fame of having written Sterne's 'Tristram Shandy,' because he said so, and was the first to get there with a copy in his pocket.

In the first bruit of any fame it is very difficult to tell which is the real Simon Pure; and the world does not much care, so that she hears or sees somebody. So a doll, which by a clockwork movement graciously bowed its head, used to be carried through Paris in the king's carriage, and receive the huzzas of the crowd or the shots of an assassin. There was a clergyman, we all know, who lived on the reputation of having written the 'Burial of Sir John Moore,' poor Wolfe's touching ode. How

many men have been secretly said to have written 'Junius's Letters'! Sir Philip Francis left at his death a copy of the letters, with MS. corrections, and this was bought for a member of his family, who, with Lady Francis, firmly believed Sir Philip to have been *the* Junius. Yet, as we all know, there are at least four other men whose names will live in history with considerable claims to the authorship.

But leaving this part of the matter, let us look upon the uncertainty of Fame. Prince George of Denmark marries Queen Anne, lives in an atmosphere of fame-giving persons, the poets and essayists of the period, is a good-natured man himself, dies, and is almost forgotten. Nay, Queen Anne is less known than Blueskin or Polly Peachum. But another young and wise foreign prince marries an English queen, and having entered warmly into a project of an International Exhibition. which had been placed before him, becomes famous all over Europe, and for all ages. His memorial in Hyde Park, commemorating the site of the Exhibition, will have a quarter of a million spent upon it, and will no doubt be the finest monument of modern times. Unfortunately, composite and elaborate monuments last not. It was proposed that the Queen should commemorate her husband by a gigantic *monolith*, or single stone pillar, of Aberdeen granite; *that* would have lasted for ever, until the very age in which we live is forgotten. Now,

probably in ages yet to come, the wondrous monument will be taken to pieces, like that of Mausolus, in the British Museum, and the statue will adorn one place, and the ornaments of the pediment another, while the bronze may be cast into guns or warlike weapons.

Fame is, after all, evanescent, poor, comfortless. It is bestowed upon one man because he is a prince, taken from another because he is poor, given to the wrong person, and snatched from the true one ; so that, like all purely worldly matters, it is not worth having. Get as much of it as you can, and you will find it but cold comfort :—

> 'Tis as a snowball, which derives assistance
> From every flake, and yet rolls on the same ;
> Even to an iceberg it may chance to grow,
> But after all 'tis nothing but cold snow.

Perhaps the wisdom of the English is shown in adopting the word fame instead of glory, which, in French, means much the same as what we mean by fame. It was said of Wellington that he never used the word 'glory.' What is true of him is, that he always put the word *duty* as his first aim, and always loved to look, not to his own private ends, but to public results. Too used up after Waterloo, save to eat something and throw himself on his bed, the tears channeled white streaks down his battle-stained cheeks the next morning when his secretary read over the roll-call of the dead, and he wrote

thus to his friend: 'I cannot express the regret and sorrow I feel at these losses. The glory resulting from such actions, so dearly bought, can be no consolation to me compared with the loss.' But he hopes that the object for which they fought—the peace of Europe—will be attained; and then it is, he says, that the 'glory of our friends' (not his own, mind that) and of the action in which they had fallen, will be 'some consolation to us for their loss.' Contrast this honest, manly thought, written in the first flush of victory, the value of which the Duke knew as well as any man, with Napoleon's view of glory, and his constant appeals to the passion for it which he knew subsisted in his soldiers' breasts.

It is less to be regretted that Lord Bacon did not finish his fragment of an Essay on Fame, since he treated it altogether as Report. Thus he says: 'Julius Cæsar took Pompey unprovided, and laid asleep his industry and preparations by a *fame* that he cunningly gave out that Cæsar's own soldiers loved him not.' And he again returns to this: 'therefore, let all wise governors have a watch and care over *fames*, as they have of the actions and designs themselves.' But the specific meaning which we attach to it was well known even then; for he adds: 'Fame is of that force,' that it is the agent and promoter of almost all great actions. Milton is, as he always is, noble in definition:—

> Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
> (That last infirmity of noble mind)
> To scorn delight and live laborious days.

Not, as he afterwards says, that they ever get their reward; but yet, to the good man, the contemplation of it is of sufficient recompense and impulse. There is little doubt that poets and great writers, great generals, great painters, chemists, inventors, and others, feel that fame (report) is sufficient reward. 'Report my cause aright,' is all that *Othello* asks; and the epigram on Leonidas is beautiful in its truthful simplicity: 'Stranger, tell it at Lacedæmon that we died here in obedience to her laws;' that is, that the general and his three hundred laid down their lives coolly, resolutely, knowingly, and for duty. So a good man, and a true man, can enjoy fame by anticipation. *Exegi monumentum ære perennius.* 'I have raised up a monument more lasting than brass,' says Horace of his verses.

> Not marble nor brazen monuments
> Of kings shall outlive this powerful rhyme.

So wrote Shakspeare, the remainder of the sonnet giving a singular proof that he meant what he said. These men knew their power. 'Many shall misunderstand me, but I shall live,' is the burden of the generous and pure Milton, when he prays for 'fit audience, though few.' Report of good actions the soul may rejoice in hearing;

and the vanity of wishing to be praised by noble and true women and wise and excellent men may perhaps be forgiven us; but, after all, the love of fame is an infirmity, although the infirmity of noble minds. He must be a weak man who loves to be tickled with compliment, and 'fed with soft dedication' all day long. Praise is cream, custard, pap; simple truth is strong meat. A good action is its own best reward. What does it now matter to Jones if he did first invent flat-irons, if Brown took the credit? Both are dead. In the next world, lies, bruits, or noises, and voices—especially the voice so oft mistaken, that of Fame—will be dead; but the voices of Conscience and Truth will for ever remain. Our final Judge will know, and we shall know, what and how much we did:—

> As He pronounces lastly on each deed,
> Of so much fame in Heaven expect thy meed.

CHAPTER XX.

SELF GODLINESS.

CHAPTER XX.

A Deep Sermon—The Habitations of Mammon—Seeking Salvation—Theatrical Godliness—Pharisees—Eggs not to be laid on the Sabbath—Selfishness of the Faith of some People—Humility.

THE wisdom of Shakspere is so great and manifestly so wide searching, that it may be dissected, and each separate sentence of a long speech full of suggestions will be found in itself offering most satisfying food for thought. And some of these sentences have a kind of recalcitrant sharpness; that is, they kick or strike backwards as well as forwards, and hold a double amount of virtue. Nay, the backward reflection is by far the deeper and the sweeter. Thus, when *Mrs. Quickly* is describing the death of *Sir John Falstaff*, a man who lived, as we all know, after this world, but who had good qualities sufficient to excite the

love of many of his followers, she relates that the dying knight called out 'God, God, God!' three times, and adds a sentence at once comic in its seriousness and awful in its satire—'Now I, *to comfort him, bid him 'a should not think of God.*' Was ever a deeper sermon preached than that sentence? Let us imagine the comfort of a dying man, the sands of whose life have decreased from thousands to tens, almost to units, who is forced to banish the thought of God! Further, let us regard the lesson of the life of such a man, to whom the only comfort could be a banishment of good; whose companion would quiet his last despairing cry by the presentation of a yet blanker despair. Let us look at the companion herself; faithful in her folly, and yet trying to aid her dying master by snatching from him the last chance of repentance, and plucking off the buds of hope, put forth, alas! too late, too late. Turn the sentence as we will, it is sublime in its cruel-kind satire, and is only surpassed by a heavier blow in that way from the lips of the Saviour himself, when he tells the unjust to make to themselves 'friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness; that when ye fail, *they* may receive you into everlasting or (age-enduring) habitations.' What habitations must these be?

In another great play, and equally from the mouth of a clownish person—only this one is a he-clown, not a she-clown—Shakspere gives us a second sermon in a comic sentence, with its deeply serious side. *Ophelia*, in

her madness, and in disobedience to that fate which is closing so darkly around the house of Hamlet, slips into a brook and drowns. But this simple death is not enough for the lower people, who must still be talking, and the very grave-diggers at her burial chatter about her as a self-slayer. A sententious, ignorant help to the chief digger, using long words, of the meaning of which he is ignorant, hits us both ways by this question—'Is she to be buried in Christian burial, that *wilfully seeks her own salvation?*' Of course the man means destruction; and the Church, very properly, knowing that he who has deserted his post before the fiat of the Chief Commander could be no true soldier of the Great Captain of our faith, withheld religious ceremony from suicides. They had taken such power from the hands of society, and, at war with the world and the Church, required not her ceremonies to consecrate the ground, nor her lips to express a hope of a joyful resurrection. Hence the clown's indignation that the poor lady who was self-drowned should be buried like others is not unnatural. Even in doing evil, says this demagogic grave-maker, we poor folks shall do as much as you. If you make fools of yourselves, why should we not be allowed to do so? Cleon, Jack Cade, and Catiline would argue just as he does. 'The more pity that great folks shall have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even Christian.' Shakspere's clowns have,

however, more brains in them than twenty thousand demagogues; and the humour of a man arguing that it is a shame that he should not be allowed to hang, drown, or pistol himself when he chooses, is exquisite, and quite in the open day-light manner of the great author; whereas the humour and wisdom of the other diverted sentence is not so apparent, but when seen it is much more wondrous.

'Wilfully seeking our *own* salvation' is a grave fault with the English and Scotch; and in good truth there can hardly be a worse religious error. There is no faith in the world that does not condemn it. There is and has been no great preacher or teacher in the world who did not declare that it was the great duty of man to live for others, not for himself, and to die for others, if need be, with a total abnegation of self. But personal piety in one sense is simply Pharisaism, a kind of self-righteousness, which it is not too much to say the Saviour's great mission was partly undertaken to destroy. The cleanliness, the lustrations, the ceremonial observance and the exercise of personal prayer, personal almsgiving, personal presentation before the altar, and in fact of personal salvation amongst the most religious of the Jews, were so constant, that a man could hardly fail to believe that he had won Heaven for himself. The Pharisee took care to be instructed in the true sense of Scripture, and he believed no doubt perfectly truly. He was wiser than

the Sadducee, who denied the resurrection, and his actions were considerably better, and tended to more good than many of those whom we should now call good men. In the parable the Pharisee recites only a small part of what he has done to merit the blessing of God; and it is to be observed that without preface he begins, 'God, *I* thank thee, that *I* am not as *other men* are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican (tax-gatherer). I fast twice in the week, I give tithe of all that I possess.'

But he did more than this; if he had wronged anybody he restored what he had wrongfully taken twofold; he never sat down to meals without a prayer; he carefully succoured the poor, although he did it with ostentation; he stood up in assemblies and made his prayer openly, and he loved assemblies at the corners of wide places and squares where he might be seen. He took especial care to be observed; and the Saviour, when addressing the multitude and his disciples, remarked of the Pharisees, 'all their works they do for to be seen of men,' as we lamely translate it, whereas the true sentence, '*Pros to theathenai autois*,' means, to be theatrically exhibited to them, to be done with actual ostentation and for the sake of the show. Hence, too, the 'sounding of a trumpet before them,' has been judged by schoolmen, Erasmus and Beza, to be a figurative expression, as the word *hypokritai* (whence our hypocrites), means players disguised in masks. Milton observes that the Saviour, who

was meekness itself, lost his temper when speaking of these Pharisees : 'Thus Christ himself, the fountain of meekness, found acrimony enough to be still galling and vexing the prelatical Pharisees.'

In truth, the religion of those who were so self-righteous was opposed in every way to His teaching. His constant reference was and is to God; His determination, to reduce man not to rely upon self, but to abase self; not to live for self, but to live for others; not to depend upon the merits of self, but to look for salvation by another. It was no wonder then that our ritualistic Pharisees found out what sort of an enemy they had to deal with, and at once did all they could to slay him. They could not well be the active agents, or rather the acting agents, because they did not care to soil or pollute themselves with blood; but like the fighting Quaker on board ship, who would not fire the gun, but was most active in serving out the gunpowder, they were the motive agents of the Crucifixion; and St. Paul, a strict Pharisee, and pupil of one of their great doctors, held the clothes of the young men who stoned St. Stephen. These men thought they were doing God service; indeed it was their practice to search out wickedness and put an end to it; and in every possible way they were just to other men, paying tithe of mint and cummin, saying their prayers in the right posture, wearing the vestments of the ritual corbals and frontlets, or phylacteries, using the same sacred number

of repetitions, abstaining from meat, and in a thousand ways making life miserable by the burdens of observance that they laid upon it.

The Saviour, who referred all to God, only taking care that the heart should be changed, gives, as a contrast to the words of the Pharisee, that of the publican, or tribute-taker, a man despised and hated, very naturally, as tax-gatherers are now not much loved, although they collect the taxes which we ourselves impose on ourselves; but when such a man was one who collected the tyrannical imposts of the Roman conqueror, it is plain that he must have been of a very poor, low class, and without delicate feeling. This man, 'standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God, be merciful (or propitious) to me, a sinner.' After this heartfelt exclamation, groaned out in deep humility, the publican, we are told, went to his house justified; our version, in common with the invaluable text in the Vatican, reads, 'justified now, or rather than the other;' but in any way the Pharisee receives a great blow, and is plainly and most strongly reproved.

How, indeed, can it be otherwise? These people, who so 'wilfully sought their own salvation,' were by their very name separatists. The Hebrew word for them is *Perushûn*, separated, to which they added *Chasîdûn*, godly men or saints, sanctified. They taught that God's

goodness could only be extended to their sect, to a few, and they made the way of salvation so narrow that one cannot wonder at their logical conclusion. They counted the very letters of the Bible, and knew the centre verse and the centre letter, and held certain copies in the greatest reverence. They were all for letters, even when the spirit said, 'The letter killeth;' they were all for ceremony ritual. They treated men like children, says a writer, 'formalising and defining the minutest particulars of ritual observances.' Twice a day they were obliged to cry out a noble passage, the shema (Deut. vi. 4–9), but even that (and the passage is short) was a monstrous burden connected with other things. Certain things were clean, others were unclean, with them. *An egg laid on a feast-day following the Sabbath might not be eaten, because it was formed on the Sabbath!* Were there ever such strict Sabbatarians? Again, their symbolism was such that it ran into idolatry, and their customs were very similar to those of the modern Hindoos, a strict section of self-savers, many hundreds of whom died in the Orissa famine because they would not eat the flesh of the cow, nor drink of the soup made from beef. They had a law as to with what sort of wick the candles of the Sabbath were to be lighted on the Sabbath eve, and other laws which descended to the most minute particulars. No wonder that the whole spirit of true religion was destroyed. No wonder that God says, 'Your new moons and your

appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them.' No wonder that they are said to 'bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders,' and that they had reduced them to a bondage worse than the Egyptian slavery.

Nor can we wonder at the effect on the pride of men produced by a careful carrying out of the petty ceremonial. The Pharisee thought that very few people could be saved; and how few, we learn from a curious fragment from one of them, *Beresith Rabba*, which sounds more like a translation from the Hindoo than anything else—so much do like causes produce like effects. 'Rabbi Simeon, son of Jochai, said: the world is not worth thirty righteous persons such as our father Abraham. If there were only thirty righteous persons in the world, I and my son should make two of them: and if there were only twenty, I and my son should be of the number; and if there were only ten, I and my son would be of them; and if there were only five, I and my son would be of the five: and if there were but two, I and my son would be those two; and if there were but one, *myself should be that one.*' We see it all centres in self; and though there are many now who in public would be ashamed to repeat the above litany of Rabbi Simeon, yet, in private, how many look up to God daily and pray for

self, self, self, and hardly think of their toiling brothers and sisters that are around them.

So far as we can make out, personal religion, if it be confined to self, is just the one way which is the worst to save a man in this world or the next. It narrows all religions; it breaks men up into sects; it makes people deal out damnation to others; it is the root of all troubles. It is the personally pious king who becomes a slayer of his kind. It is the personally good, pious, and prayerful man who quietly assists at burning to death another man who does not agree with him. It is the personally pious child who is taught to glorify itself. There was a tract put into our hands the other day relating the death of a child about twelve years old, and representing—we hope falsely—that the poor child wanted to die, 'because,' she said, '*I* have seen my angel guard, that is to take me up to heaven, and I have seen *my* harp and *my* crown—oh, they are such beauties!' Here selfishness and silliness are combined. Is heaven a toyshop? Is the humble soul to be trumpeted into the awe-full presence of its Judge? Is it, indeed—our creed says otherwise—to burst from this world into the next at once, without the Judgment of the quick and the dead, and to claim its reward unabashed from beneath the fiery splendours of the great White Throne?

CHAPTER XXI.

FLATTERY AND PLAIN SPEAKING.

CHAPTER XXI.

A Courtier's Truth—Shade—Love Me, Love My Dog—Alcibiades—Raleigh's Remains—The Worth of Traitors—Flattery—A Prevailing Weakness—Whole Nations Misled—Peppering the People—Judicious praise.

THEY tell a story of King Charles II., which has been told of other kings too, but it is so much to our purpose that we will repeat it. Playing at bowls on a fine sunny afternoon at Hampton Court, there was a dispute as to whether the king's bowl lay or lay not nearest the Jack. Rochester was appealed to, and he, without looking, gave his word against the king. 'Odd's fish, man!' said the good-natured king, 'why, you never looked; how can you judge?'—'Dost think, sir,' cried Rochester, 'that those courtiers would have dared to question you, if you had not been shamefully beaten?' The king saw the truth,

and without measuring, allowed the defeat. Here was a direct acknowledgment that flattery is the language of Courts.

It does not matter whether a man be a king or a protector; men and women naturally flatter power. Queen Elizabeth did not understand much about art, and objected to shadow; her portrait is generally seen without shade, and the painter has been much put about to accomplish this; but Cromwell, seeing that his portrait painter had left out an ugly wart, said, 'Nay, friend, paint me with my warts.' One king being short, his courtiers wore low shoes to make their statures less; another, being bald, wore long wigs, and his courtiers shaved their heads; and all the world of fashion followed suit, and wore wigs for a long series of years. What are these poor people to do to escape flattery? This silent kind of compliance is insinuating. A sovereign is short, and for years her ladies will wear long gowns; an empress is graceful and tall: then short skirts prevail. Even wickedness and sin have been made the handles of flattery; a debauched Court makes a wicked country. 'I do believe, Rochester,' said the same king, Charles II., 'thou art the wickedest dog in all Christendom!'—'Of a subject,' said the courteous earl, with a bow, '*of a subject* I believe I am;' and the flattery no doubt pleased the king.

People not only flatter kings, but kings and governors

of men flatter the people. 'He who agrees with me I deem my friend; he who dissents from me, my enemy;' this seems to be the common, foolish idea; and most persons are taken with it. 'Love me, love my dog,' embodies the popular prejudice. You like and admire the tradesman for his honesty, and the working man for his skill, but you are not bound to love his leaders or misleaders, his advisers, good or bad, and yet woe unto you if you do not. They have busy flatterers about them who will do what you disdain. Alcibiades, a great soldier, though by no means a man of great honour, was a master of this sort of flattery. When he lived at Athens, he affected Athenian extravagance, kept race-horses, gambled, dressed in the extreme of fashion and luxury, and never appeared in public but with a crowd of dependents, an equipage of flatterers and servants following him. The Athenians thereon applauded, and loved him; but when he went to Sparta, which is but a few miles from Athens, he conformed to the Spartan method, dismissed his retinue, put on a coarse, mean habit, and lived as the hardest Spartan. Moving into Thrace, this accomplished flatterer put on his military habit, strutted about all armed, says Plutarch, and talked of nothing but wars and fighting, about which the Thracians were very hot; and then, flying into the Persian dominions, he clothed himself in silks and gold, put on an Eastern habit, and became a finished Persian debauchee,

conforming to luxury and vice as he did before to goodness, honesty, and virtue.

So Alcibiades was generally liked, as these trimmers very often are. But a plague on all such fellows! say we. They are just those that lead the mob to madness, fool it to the top of its bent, and never bring the wise and thinking portion of the nation into the proper place. Wisdom is a rare quality, and resides with the few. Folly, like oil upon water, spreads far and wide, and is the property of the many. It is by tickling and flattering this folly that the insinuating and double-minded man lives. What is this tickling King Mob better than pleasing King Despot? When Dionysius the Tyrant was dim-sighted and nearly blind, his courtiers, to flatter him, pretended it was an epidemic disorder, and pretended to be purblind themselves. They tumbled about, groped as if they could not see, and threw about the dishes. Does not one wish that, in a ridiculous pantomime of the sort, a real clown, with a poker really red hot, would come in and burn the legs of these old pantaloons of courtiers, and suddenly awaken them from their wickedness?

To flatter is to soothe, caress, and coax, to persuade a man that what he does is right, whether you think so or not, and therefore its greatest danger is that it must necessarily resemble friendship. Jeremy Collier, a wise man, more neglected than he should be, puts it as 'no better than interest under the disguise of friendship.'

For instance, B is a friend of A; he thinks that whatever A does is wise and right, and he says so; C is a flatterer, who, knowing more than B, sees that A does foolish things, and yet does not tell him so, but praises his folly. How is A to distinguish the truth of B from the untruth of C? Hence Sir Walter Raleigh, in his *Remains*, says, with truth, 'It is hard to know them from friends, they are so obsequious and full of protestations; for as a wolf resembleth a dog, so does a flatterer a friend.' This is bitter enough from Raleigh, who had fallen through these same specious villains; and again, the good knight, and owner of the wisest head left at that time in England for that pedant, the King of Scots and English, to take off, returns to his advice, given indeed to his son, but as good and as fresh now as then, and as applicable to the people as to the sovereign :—

'Know that flatterers are the worst kind of traitors; for they will strengthen thy imperfections, encourage thee in all thy evils, correct thee in nothing, but so shadow and paint all thy vices and follies, as thou shalt never, by their will, discern good from evil, or vice from virtue.'

As the aim of flatterers is generally interest, the escape from these noxious animals is one of the great blessings of poverty. Great men, rich men, and pretty women are those who are most subject to them. They court great men, not because they are great, but because they are

are powerful. They love the places in their gift, not the men.

When the king falls, the flatterer, like a full-fed leech, gorged with the blood he has sucked, falls off. The rich man is surrounded by flatterers for that which may drop or proceed from him, and the pretty woman for her beauty, and for the power which that beauty gives. The poor, the ugly, and the lowly escape all this. When the banished Duke is in the forest with his faithful lords, he finds that life is more sweet than that of Courts, and tells his attendant courtiers, his co-mates and brothers in exile, that the wind and the cold, the sun and the air, do not flatter, but 'feelingly persuade us what we are.' So a poor man and an ugly woman hear the truth. Your strong, sturdy thief does not try to rob a beggar; he will even sooner throw him a shilling that he has stolen; nor does your poor man get beset with wretches who will confuse his brains. He is thought of not sufficient worth; he may understand himself, and make the most of his discretion.

Much as we may rail against flattery, it is very potent; and few people are so poor as not to have a flatterer who will soothe their vanity, and make them fancy that their attractions are great and unappreciated. Poor Miss Squeers, in Dickens's story, is but a vulgar hoyden, with red hair, a turn-up nose, and eyes that could hardly be called a pair; and yet she found a servant girl who, poor

thing ! found it worth her while to flatter her. 'Oh, you do look nice, miss, you do !' and so on. Happily for human goodness, human nature is so varied, that it is just possible that these busy flatterers may be innocent. 'No fool but finds a greater to admire,' says a satirist; and it may be that even Miss Squeers had some one who really liked her. But we may be sure that Miss Squeers relished the soft dose. You may spread this sort of flattery on with a trowel to most men, and women too. One old fellow left money to a man who always told him that he looked well. Other men are so tender, that they will positively sicken if they are told that they look but poorly. One man's heart is to be gained by the assertion that he grows thinner; the thin man, on the contrary, is delighted if he hears that he has gained flesh.

> All potent Flattery, universal lord !
> Reviled, yet courted; censured yet adored !
> How thy strong spell each human bosom draws,
> The very echo to our self-applause !

Yes, that is it. Be truly cunning when you flatter, and find out what a man or woman is most proud of, and then touch up that. Even persuade him that he can see through you, knows that you are honest, that it would be impossible to deceive him, or to hoodwink him. He is so direct, so clever : you might as well seek to race and beat an express train with a London cab-horse as to blind him ; so

When I tell him he hates flattery,
He says he does ! being then most flatter'd !

It is a signal misfortune to be constantly flattered and to believe our flatterers. If it be misery to lose the eyes of the body, to grope about in the world and to be led by a child or a dog, it is as great a misery to lose the eyes of the mind and to be led by a worse dog and more deceitful child. To believe you are wise, and yet to be known for a fool,—to have your apparent strength, your bulk as Collier puts it, 'to lie mostly in Tumour, and to be big with a Bubble, is an unfortunate greatness,'—to imagine that you are worth a thousand a year when the bank has broken and you have not a penny, is a wretched state; but your flatterer has not only robbed you; he has stripped and beaten you. You were all right until he came upon you; now he has puffed you up, and people hate you for the reason of his false glosses.

The flatterer then is a foe, not a friend, and just about the worst enemy a man can have, because he comes to him under the mask of friendship. He speaks fair things to a man, not from a generous appreciation of goodness, but merely for his own purposes, to lull judgment to sleep, and then to carry out his own designs: it is thus that a true friend is to be distinguished from a false one. All people are too apt to fancy themselves wiser and better than they really are,—handsomer, more clever, and more perfect.

And of this common failing the flatterer is ready to take advantage. He will begin by making all things look smooth and pleasant. Belial, 'the least erected spirit that fell,' is pictured by Milton as a flatterer, apt to make 'the worse appear the better reason.' Whole nations suffer by this as well as single persons. There are always to be found stump-orators who begin by flattering their audience, by dwelling on the power, industry, or wisdom of the people, that at last, so poisoned are the ears of the multitude, running after these tickling and cunning demagogues or people snarers, that good, wholesome truth cannot be heard. We have every respect for the American republic, and it is therefore with sorrow that we have to record, on the authority of the 'North American Review,' one of the highest authorities on America, that the populace are so inflated with their greatness, that an orator who reproves them is hooted down. 'You cannot, you dare not tell the truth to the people; they have for years been accustomed to hear nothing but lies.' A certain series of Essays was printed in America; but every word which seemed against popular or American feeling was expunged by an American editor before his publication was sold; yet in England, happily some of the most unpleasant truths are told in the higher papers, and the editors are, as they should be, esteemed.

In England there has always existed a wholesome current of criticism. The proverb goes, that every

Englishman will have his grumble. Nothing is so good at home as it is abroad; 'they do these things better in France' is a popular expression. Hence, so accusing and excusing ourselves, we maintain progress. Let us be honest and manly; let us hear the truth and profit by it. The working men may be the most virtuous in the world, but it is only flatterers who will tell us so; and while teetotallers endeavour to prove that we are the most drunken people, the police, for whom we pay three millions annually, affirm that we are the most constant in robberies; so, if this be true, we must have but a poor virtue. And when a general election comes, brought in with a general fit of rioting and drunkenness, when a dozen members at least—shall we say fifty?—are guilty of bribery, what are we to say of the virtue of those who take the bribes! Come, let us be sensible, and own that there are plenty of holes in all our coats. The first step towards mending a fault is to know where the fault is. Those who flatter the populace do so in order to gain power, as the fox in the old fable, finding a crow with a piece of cheese in its beak, persuaded it to sing. 'Some fools say you croak, but I think you sing better than the nightingale; pray give me a few notes.' The crow opened its beak to make the effort, and dropped the cheese.

All praise is, however, not flattery: some is so mixed and dashed with truth, that, like bad gold coloured with

fine gold, it looks all of a piece. A great orator sometimes gives us some of this seven-carat gold, made up as first-rate. 'When I look on this great country,' he said to a popular assemblage of working-men, 'and see the millions of houses you have built, the wealth you have created, the ships you have freighted with wealth, the railways and roads you have formed, the lands you have cultivated, the mines you have explored, I——' and then he burst out into a laudation of one class only. But such oratory as this is built on a logical fallacy. The praise of the riches of England belongs, first, to our ancestors, who made wise laws; secondly, to our religious freedom; and thirdly, to the capital and intelligence, as well as the industry, of the country. Who constructs a railway?—the engineer, who plans and invents, or the navvy and the bricklayer? The engineer and the inventor have at least their share, or we might as well praise the machines that cut the sleepers and moulded the bricks. All honour to hard work, whether of the brain or hand; but to exalt one class at the expense of another is to flatter; and they who are flattered know it pretty well too.

Judicious praise is wholesome and nourishing. The young especially should be guided and taught by praise, properly mingled with caution and blame. In fact, it is no paradox to say that, properly administered, plain speaking and even blame is the best part of praise, just

as the shadow is oftentimes the finest part of a picture. When man, woman, or boy, works well, and does well, it is as unwise as it is cruel to withhold what a poet calls 'the cheerful meed of praise.' It is meed, because it is due reward; and some natures hunger for it. All quickly perceptive and feminine natures—all who are authors, artists, fine workmen—love it. There is nothing so stimulating as honest, judicious, righteous approval; and it may be that in Heaven even we shall hear it.

But praise and blame must be freely accorded to make either efficacious. The plain speaker, who is always 'telling his mind,' has generally a very unpleasant mind to tell. He alone is wise who holds his tongue till the right time; who waits till conscience has done its work, and self-approval has bestowed its silent reward. There is a famous old quotation from a capital old comedy which will fitly close this essay: 'Approbation,' says one of the characters with a grateful bow, 'approbation from Sir Hubert Stanley is praise indeed.' Sir Hubert Stanley's character is given in the phrase. He was no flatterer; no snarling plain-speaker; but a gentleman of honour and of judgment; free to blame when necessary; equally ready to praise when praise was due. From such men a few gracious words are indeed precious; from a flatterer they are worse than worthless: they are poison.

CHAPTER XXII.

PEACE AND WAR.

CHAPTER XXII.

The Cost of a Conqueror—Life sometimes well lost—London Dangers—Firemen—Conquest a Fertilising Influence—Deaths along the Coast—London Mortality—The Sword of Gold—Worse than War—England at War The Cankers of Peace.

ONE of our best modern historians has lately treated us to one of those pleasant literary games which amuse as well as instruct, but which are, after all, not thoroughly satisfactory. The gentleman writes upon the 'Cost of Napoleon.' He might as well term his article the Cost of Ambition, or of War in Modern Times, or the partial cost, for no one can tell us the whole cost and the whole truth. He presumes, then, let us say, that Napoleon the Great—if indeed, in consolidating constitutional liberty in France, the present Napoleon may not prove to be much the greater of the two—cost France about one million of

human lives and five millions of money. That estimate appears to us to be very modest indeed. Napoleon cost us—the British nation—at a moderate calculation, four hundred millions of money; and how many men, Heaven only knows. We, in what we term the Abyssinian war, that military promenade into the interior of Africa, for which we are to pay the enormous sum of twelve millions, killed King Theodore, and luckily lost not a man; but the Crimean war cost us an immense number of lives and two hundred millions of pounds. Is this dreadful? We do not think it is. The old song, 'Go patter to lubbers,' is in true sailor fashion, and is good philosophy. It tells us that a sailor's life is intended to be thrown away, and that the right end of life is sometimes losing it. Visiting a 'Fire Station' one day, we marked the great happiness, self-respect, and cleanliness of the men and their wives—how cheerful they were, and how ennobled they seemed to be by their calling. These men, perhaps, do not earn much, but every halfpenny they earn they enjoy. There was the cosy little room for man and wife, little kitchen, pantry, all tidy and pleasant; there the warm, good clean bed, from which A. B. must be ready to jump up at any moment, to go and die a most dreadful death; there the wife lies alone, knowing that her husband has gone out with his life in his hand, and may at any time be brought back a blackened corpse, if at all. In thirty-three years we have had

in London thirty-five thousand fires. Captain Shaw has not given us any statistics of the loss of men, but an experienced witness says, 'I fear the list would be long and terrible.'

There are a few notable instances of deaths in that way: one man had been but one year in the service when he was burnt to death between walls half crushing him, while Inspector Braidwood was killed after a service of twenty-eight years and six months. Captain Shaw himself, after three years' service, fell from a roof forty feet high into a fire, and miraculously escaped with his life. These brave firemen incur all the danger of a constant battle; and, let us say it, to the honour of our human nature, there is not a man, woman, or child that does not respect a fireman. We saw one brave fellow climb a wall and run, cat-like, in the midst of flames, along the edge of a parapet to save a life, and the deep-throated shouts of applause which greeted him—shouts of joy forced from hundreds of hearts, joy which could not be contained nor withheld—were worth a king's ransom. Such a man wins his honour, and wears it like a crown; he, too, spends his life. Does he repine at his hard fate, and weep mawkish tears about the value of human life? No; a hundred times, no. Let the friends of the felon and the murderer do that; not he. Like Macaulay's soldier, he sings—

And how can man die better
Than facing fearful odds,
For the ashes of his fathers,
And the temples of his gods!

But you and I, good reader, and our neighbour Jack Smith, if we do our duty, are spending our lives in the right way; that is what they were given us for. Desk-work may be killing one, and shop-work may be killing the other; happy are we if we work well on this track we have chosen or fallen in with. 'Talk about the cost of Napoleon,' says a reviewer, 'how many lives has Christianity cost? How many perished in the barbarian conquest of Rome, which regenerated Europe?' And we may add, how many died in the American civil war, which finally stamped out slavery from civilised life? The author of the paper we refer to admits that on the whole Napoleon's was a 'fertilising influence.' He is right: nothing is so fertilising as blood.

But not only soldiers die. Mr. Bright, in one of those grimly humorous replies in which his sturdy English sense stands up, bull-dog like, and shows its teeth against the sugar-candy twaddle we so much abhor, once spoke these memorable words to the House of Commons: 'Talk about the dangers of railway travelling—Nonsense! Think of the dangers of the streets! I'm not sure that a first-class railway carriage is not the safest place a man can possibly be in for any given length of time.' Cer-

tainly we are more likely to be killed elsewhere—in a shop by gas or by kerosene, as they call mineral oil in our colonies and America, which, by the way, is said to have destroyed Chicago; in a house, by drains, fire, infections, fever, choking, breaking a blood-vessel, falling; at sea, and so on.

In ten years we lost on our coasts, from collisions and founderings only, 3,847 lives; from stranded ships with bad boats, 4,222 lives; from boats in getting from the ships after collision, 872 lives, so that after they were saved they were lost! But death is at work everywhere. Here, in the first quarter of 1870, we have the Registrar-General noting down 21,406 deaths in London only. There were 8,401 children not five years old among these warriors, and 3,605 people of mature age, between forty and sixty.

How many of these perish from really hard work, from selfish indulgence, from the greed of others, from the demands of society—let us say merely those demands, one of which is foolish and the other not over-sensible! The foolish one is the custom of eating hot rolls, a dyspeptic, unwholesome food, which keeps many a poor baker up all night, and sends him into consumption and the grave. The other is the demand for the morning newspaper, which is brought in, damp and redolent of printer's ink, with the hot roll. Mr. Dickens, in a humorous speech in aid of the newsvendors, cited a newsman's opinion

that the universal passion was to get our newspaper early, if possible before anyone else, and to keep it as long as possible, always believing that the boy came too early for it. But this 'universal passion,' while it employs thousands of men and boys, and hundreds of machines, and supports a very important branch of commerce, a branch which in its way adds to the civilisation of the world, slays many a man every year as surely as the sword of steel.

'Peace hath her victories, no less renown'd than war,' —undoubtedly she has; but those victories are by no means bloodless affairs. When the Spaniard Pizarro had discovered and conquered Peru,—and his conquest was a marvellous one,—he no doubt impressed the Incas, and the soft and peaceable inhabitants, with a due sense of European superiority by the force of arms. Civilisation thus marches onward, and her march is marked with human blood. The Peruvians, in their cruel superstitions, had a habit of roasting human hearts as a sacrifice to the Sun-God,—a habit which the Spanish Roman Catholics punished by awful slaughter; but the sword of the brave Spaniard, who at any rate perilled his own life, was a mere plaything, a pin's point, to the cruel sword of gold which his countrymen used afterwards. There is no sadder chapter in history than the utter desolation of Peru, and the wearing out with cruel drudgery, with the work of beasts of burden, with labour in mines for which they

were totally unfitted, of nearly six millions of people. Pizarro landed in 1531 with one hundred and forty men (infantry), and thirty-six horses and mounted cavaliers; and, cruel as they were, these, of course, could slay, comparatively, but few. But they who came afterwards, with their accursed search for gold, proved what a much more deadly weapon the golden sword is than that of steel. There is an evil under the sun worse than war. War often ennobles. Its praises have been sung by high-minded men; it is, at any rate, not all evil: nor is peace always a perfect blessing.

'Have you ever thought,' asked a philosophic friend, 'of the cost to us of this long peace with France? Most unthinking people would say that it is all gain; but it is no such thing.' The speaker was essentially a man of peace, a man who looks at both sides of a question, one who has spent his life in trying to benefit mankind; and he asserted that, while no doubt our manufactures had increased and our merchants had grown very rich, the working classes had not adequately benefited, and that French manners had been imported largely into England, with French morals, French plays of the worst kind, a French way of regarding Religion and Science, and certain matters at the West End of the town, to which we cannot more particularly allude. We do not, purposely, carry this enquiry further.

> We do but throw this torch into the dark,
> That, dying, it may chance to kindle flame.

We use the conversation as a hint only, and while fully alive to the faults of the great nation over the water, we beg to say that we are very much its friends and admirers. Our grandfathers, who had their turn at fighting, too, knew what were—

> The cankers of a calm world, and a long peace,

to quote Shakspeare, and went joyously enough to war as occasion served, knowing that with many evils it also brought some good. In the days of French friendship and alliance, in King Charles the First's time, the spirit of the nation declined; but when Cromwell set Richelieu at defiance, and did as he liked in helping Protestants, up rose the English name, spirit, and happiness once more. Again, when Charles II. became the slave of France and accepted French money and French mistresses from a French king, the nation sank to the lowest degradation, until the wars of Queen Anne, in which we held our own against the 'Mounseers,' and beat them in the open field a dozen times. Then the spirit and the fortunes of England grew bright again, and we found that, however valuable France was as a friend, she was at least equally valuable as a foe.

We know very acute men who argue that it is well to be at war. We know that for seven hundred years the

great men who laid the foundation of that magnificent Roman republic which became the mistress of the world, took care always to have some war on hand, and ceased to observe that rule only when they had nothing to overcome. Then came the culmination,—quietude, peace, plenty, luxury ; a city crowded with rich people, lazy people, people too proud to work, disdaining industry, living in utter idleness, and therefore in a terrible amount of vice. The sword of gold followed, with its dreadful punishments, and a nightmare history, so full of ugly forms of sin and shapes of cruelty, that it is distressful to read it. The stabber and the murderer were crowned ; the city that had become drunken with blood reeled to and fro ; the few early Christians, who dared by an innocent life to pass censure on these monsters, were torn by dogs or crucified alive, or smeared with pitch and set on fire, to light the bloated Cæsar, as, puffed with pride and gluttony, he stalked amidst his slaves to some new debauch. It is only in reading some of the dreadful prophecies of the Apocalypse, or in recalling to mind some of our troubled and distressful dreams, that we can realise the state of society into which Rome had fallen from the moment when the corrective of danger and of war was taken away from her. Is there any need to prove that Peace, sitting under her fig-tree, and letting false political economy starve half the poor people to death, and buy human labour at starvation prices, while it

mentions something about supply and demand, something which drugs its conscience, and which it does not understand, is not a pretty figure?—that it is not so holy as a war for the truth and the right? After even the few figures that we have given, is there any necessity to prove that in the race for wealth as many fail as in the race for fame? We think not.

The case then eventually forms itself thus: War is a state not wholly to be feared; nor is Peace alone to be loved. Peace may be bought at much too dear a rate in consenting to evils, in doing an injustice rather than fighting, in abandoning one's friends, in deserting abstract right, in worshipping a false god, or maintaining, or consenting to the maintenance of, a religion you know to be false. Is Peace worth having on such terms? No, ten thousand times, no. Then is the time to break with your former friend, looking him straight in the face, and throwing away the scabbard as you draw the sword. But if you preserve the peace basely, if by an unhallowed alliance and peace you grow prosperous and rich, you are not one whit the happier. The evils of a calm world are worse than those of war; the corruptions kill more than the clean-cut wounds. The spirit of a man or of a nation is made mean and pitiful by too much wealth; and the demands of Death are by no means slackened, for the sword of gold slays as many as the sword of steel.

CHAPTER XXIII.

FAITH IN MAN.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Trust—Public Confidence—Religion—Society—Sweet Simplicity—Little Actions—Anxiety—Distrust—Broken Friendships—A Boy's Confidence—Credulity—True Faith—Misery of Doubt.

GOOD faith or Trust is one of the most important and beautiful principles of our nature. On it depends, not only our eternal safety, but much of our comfort, prosperity, and the happiness of our social relations in this world; in fact, it is the foundation on which the whole of our transactions and dealings with our fellow-men must mainly rest. It pervades the whole social system, from the highest to the lowest of its ramifications, in its most important and its most trifling details.

Statesmen must have some confidence in each other to act in concert; they must be trusted by the nation to

carry on its government with any degree of success. Mercantile transactions necessarily involve and suppose trust in the parties concerned, except in minor and exceptional cases, where credit is not at all in question, but where the affair is conducted at the moment. Physicians have little chance of effecting a cure unless they possess the full confidence of their patients; and it is well known that the success which may sometimes attend the treatment of a quack, in preference to that of a regular practitioner, is mainly owing to the faith with which he contrives to inspire the invalid.

The counsels of parents, the instruction given by tutors, and the advice of friends, all depend upon the degree of confidence felt by the recipient for their acceptance and success; and there can be no doubt that to be able to inspire this trust is the great secret of governing, or at least, guiding those who are placed under our immediate influence and direction. When this is once gained, half, or rather three parts, of the difficulty so often complained of by those who have, or ought to have, authority over others, vanishes at once; and though there will doubtless be always some failures in obedience, some wanderings from the path indicated by the superior, there will be little resistance and still less irritation on the part of his charge.

We need only refer to the Jesuits, as an illustration, not an example, of the wonderful effect of implicit faith

and unquestioning obedience;—a principle which has given a degree of power unparalleled in a body without temporal power, rank, or local territory. It is of course carried by them to a most dangerous, some say criminal point, destroying the right of private judgment, and all sense of right and wrong; but it is a proof of the power of the engine thus employed, and its usefulness, under proper limitations; and when used in a legitimate manner.

We have spoken of the importance and usefulness of this principle; but it is as beautiful and graceful exercised to equals as it is valuable in its exercise to superiors. What can be more sweet and attractive than the simple faith of a child?—its unquestioning trust in others, its unsuspiciousness that any wrong or unkindness can be intended?—its sincerity in the care and love of its guardians? Like other attributes of our nature, it loses its simplicity and gentleness as time and experience unhappily mar its purity and weaken its strength. But this is an effect of intercourse with the world, and of the growth of less peaceful and less amiable feelings and qualities,—of distrust, self-will, and selfishness,—which are too often developed by injudicious treatment. But the difficulty which certainly attends the preservation of this quality, and the shocks to which it is at all times exposed, are but additional motives for cultivating it to the utmost, and so strengthening and guarding it as to keep it, as far as possible, in its original purity, without

allowing it to degenerate into its contemptible and dangerous counterfeit, credulity.

Let us consider a little the advantages of such efforts on our part. First, it is to preserve, so far as we can in an imperfect state, that attribute which, as

> Heaven's best gift and friendship's stay,

was and is a characteristic of innocence. Those who are the most conscious that their own feelings and intentions are pure, who are the most kindly disposed, and the least occupied with self, are not only the most indulgent, but the most trusting towards others. They do not suspect what they do not feel themselves ; they need strong proof ere they will attribute guile when they themselves are guileless, unkindness or caprice which they know they have not deserved. With them truly 'charity' goes with 'faith,' and they view their friends and acquaintances through the pure and beautifying glasses which these qualities supply to their possessor.

To indulge suspicion or distrust without most sufficient and convincing evidence, is one sad consequence of the presence in the heart of the wrong feelings and motives thus attributed to others, and of the departure from the enviable and lovely simplicity of childhood and innocence. And one of the strongest motives and most effectual modes for preserving this happy and attractive state of mind, is to banish from our own hearts 'all evil towards

our neighbour,' so far as is possible, both in thought, word, and deed. Again, this habit of mind is most conducive to the comfort, both of the individual who cultivates it, and all with whom he comes immediately in contact. Nothing can be more destructive to peace than a suspicious temper, ready to lay hold of and misinterpret, or feel doubtful as to the meaning of every casual word, action, or even look. There are so many causes at work on every mind which affect the manner, the looks, and the minor actions of our every-day life, that incessant grounds for surprise, annoyance, and distrust will be found by those who cannot, in spite of appearances, trust their friends and their acquaintances.

Secret anxiety, mental pre-occupation, bodily indisposition, and perhaps a ruffled temper, may produce an air of coldness, reserve, or neglect, when the feelings are as warm and kindly as ever. Or a person is led, from necessity or some purely accidental reason, to devote his attention to a third individual, to the apparent neglect of the friend accustomed to share a large portion of his conversation and confidence ; then the distrustful temper instantly takes umbrage, is astonished, pained, thoroughly disturbed, and all peace, comfort, and calmness of temper are destroyed, and for the time social enjoyment is entirely lost. He, on the contrary, who habitually trusts the sincerity and affection of a friend, who takes for granted that there may be countless reasons completely

unconnected with any change of feeling, preserves his happiness and his temper unruffled, has no uneasiness as to the stability of the attachment and friendship once given to him, and is rewarded by the rapid disappearance of the temporary cloud, without the serenity of his horizon having been disturbed. And the comfort of such a temper is assuredly not less to friends than to the possessor of it.

It is a wonderful relief, a most delicious repose, to feel certain that we shall not be misunderstood ; that we need not watch every look and action, lest it should excite distrust ; but that we are with those who will trust us through the most condemning appearances ; that we need not fear, even if grave and pre-occupied, or silent, or devoted for the moment to some less valued and intimate friend ; but that all this circumstantial evidence will fail to make us receive the verdict of 'Guilty,' or even 'Not Proven,' as to caprice or change. And even in more serious matters, where there are really circumstances which seem suspicious, nay, condemnatory, or where the voice of slander or envy has been busy, and where, as so often happens—

> They who had been friends in youth,
> Ere evil tongues had slander'd truth—

have their faith severely tried ; yet still we would say—

> Trust the lover, trust the friend,

in the midst of all, till positive proof is given of fickleness, treachery, or unworthiness.

Countless are the friendships broken, engagements dissolved, and even husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, divided, for lack of this same blessed quality of trust. Distance would be of comparatively small consequence; the tale-bearer, the slanderer, or the plotter would lose their power to sting or to estrange; accidental silence, and mistaken reports, would no longer be so fatal to happiness if persons would trust each other through good report and evil report, through condemnatory appearances, and through the ordeal of distance and of time. It is in themselves that the fault chiefly lies, not in circumstances; in their belief, not in the reports themselves. We could almost say that they deserve more blame than the gossip and the slanderer, since their own distrust gave poison to the weapon, and pointed the deadly sting, otherwise powerless to wound.

It is quite sufficient when the real, irresistible proof of unworthiness comes, to withdraw confidence, and suffer the pangs which betrayed affection and friendship must necessarily feel, without the heedless risk and additional anxiety and suspense of doubt and suspicion. Again, there is a wonderful power and safeguard in this same trustfulness of temper. It is said that the Rugby boys declared 'it was a shame to deceive Dr. Arnold, because

he always believed them;' and the same remark will apply in a majority of cases to those who hold a strong and simple faith in those once trusted to the very last moment possible. True, there are constant instances of betrayed trust and of outraged confidence; yet there is something in this same beautiful unsuspiciousness and childish faith, which, like innocence, inspires a love—a tender, chivalrous feeling of honour, which makes persons shrink from injuring and repaying such trust by treachery and deceit. And we believe that the contrary temper, like many prophecies, works its own fulfilment of the suspicions it is so ready to entertain, and provokes the change of feeling, the deceit, and the estrangement which it incessantly attributes to others.

This rule is also especially applicable to those in any authority, who too often induce their underlings to practise at last in reality that of which they have been suspected. They seem to think that they may as well have the faults as well as the penalty of misdeeds, and are provoked into errors and breaches of faith of which they would otherwise have never thought; while a judicious confidence would have appealed to that sense of honour which is seldom quite absent from any heart. Unnecessary restraint and suspicion are as mischievous as laxity and too great exposure to temptation; but a kind heart and tolerable judgment will easily find the medium between the extremes.

This brings us to the last point, on which we would offer some suggestions to our readers, especially the younger portion of them.

Credulity and thoughtless readiness to repose confidence and give friendship or affection, make no part of the quality of which we have been speaking, as a general temper of mind towards others; and it is undoubtedly right and amiable to believe good till evil is proved—to be slow to suspect, and reluctant to imagine, the worst motives where others can be fairly attributed. But in individual instances there should be prudent slowness in yielding that full confidence, and the friendship and love, which are the greatest treasures any human being can bestow; and which, once given, should be permanent and unshaken, save on serious and unmistakable proofs of its misplacement. Those who give easily, rapidly, and lightly, such regard and trust, usually withdraw with as little reason, or else suffer many a bitter trial as the reward of their weak imprudence. In fact, this is more facility of temper and shallowness of feeling than the true friendship of which we have been speaking; and though we confess it is more attractive, and perhaps more amiable, than the other extreme of coldness and suspicion, it is a dangerous temperament to indulge, and the confidence and affection of such persons are neither of the value nor the permanence of more reserved and slower dispositions. But, in any case, 'Have faith in others;' believe

that there are explanations of apparent mysteries, reasons for puzzling changes, or even wounding neglect and silence, which, when known to us, will be satisfactory and soothing to our temporary uneasiness ; and, in conclusion, let us remember that—

> If deceit must vex the heart,
> Who can pass through life without ?
> Better far to feel the smart,
> Than to grieve the soul with doubt.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE GOOD NEWS.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Clergymen—Dreadful Assurances—Terrifying Words—Too Late—Books of Punishments—The Cross—Agony—The Holy Office—The Question—Wordsworth—Suggestions—A Glad Philosophy — Coleridge—A Death-Bed—The Miserere and Gloria Patri.

AMONGST one hundred thousand clergymen, there of course must be many of exquisitely bad taste, for the capacity of acquiring knowledge up to a certain point, so as to be ordained, or even take the B.A. degree, is not, never was, and never will be, the same as that of original thought and just appreciation. From these men of bad taste we have very many sermons, and they being really the body of the priesthood, we get the too prevalent and too often gloomy view of Christianity which lies about us. It happened that on an Easter Sunday, when the Greek Church was so ecstatic that its devout members ran about

the streets saluting each other with a holy kiss, and shouting out 'Christ is risen!' 'Christ is risen!' we heard a good man proclaim the glad tidings, with the melancholy assurance that we were all desperate sinners, and that about nineteen-twentieths of us would be burnt to all eternity. He did not even reassure us, as did an American pastor his hearers, with the opinion, that after 'being burnt to a crisp' we should feel no more but drop into a painless and quiet annihilation. How calmly he droned out this desperate and most awful news, and how quietly the village congregation listened to it; how we all knelt at the benediction, and how the ladies hurried out of church, and compared notes on their bonnets; and how the farmers in smock-frocks, and the farmers who were gentlemen, walked quietly home, talking about the crops, the April weather, steam as compared with horse ploughing, deep headlands, and improved drainage, my readers can imagine.

It was plain that the parson (and, for truth's sake, we must add that he is a good, kindly, hardworking old scholar, who periodically knocks himself up in trudging from door to door of his wide parish trying to do good,) had flown quite over their heads. Either they did not *understand* his sermon, or did not believe in the fate in store for them, or they quietly assured themselves that they all were of the number of the elect; for they, to all appearance, were as peaceful and at rest as their fathers

who slept beneath the little grass-grown heaps outside the hill-church. Perhaps they did not quite comprehend what the parson said, and only accepted his message-divine, as did Tennyson's Northern Farmer when he said—

An' I hallus comed to's choorch afoor moy Sally wur deäd,
An' 'eerd un a bummin' awaäy loike a buzzard-clock ower my yeäd,
An' I niver knaw'd what a meän'd, but I thowt a 'ad summut to saäy,
An' I thowt a said what a owt to 'a said, an' I comed awaäy.

In that extraordinary picture from the life, you see the old man never really understood what the parson, who was buzzing away like a cockchafer over his head, preached about; but anxious that others besides himself should do *their* duty, he went to hear the parson do *his*; and then, having 'thought that he said what he ought to have said,' he (the farmer) 'comed awaäy:' there are a great many people whose belief is much like that of the farmer.

If, instead of a country church, we go to a country chapel, the result will be the same, or it may be something worse. We shall find incapable men, as too often we find in many churches, unable to attract their flocks, seeking power by terrifying them, just as we see grooms who cannot manage a horse, trying to conquer it by continued beating. One distinguished preacher, of whom, in other matters, we must speak highly, took occasion to

tell his flock that, if they did not heed him, he should have the melancholy satisfaction of seeing them 'float about in waves of eternal fire, looking vainly up to him for aid, while he would remind them of the many times he had warned them ; but it would be then too late.'

The effect of this kind of preaching we may see in lunatic asylums, where half the wards are filled with unhappy women and men driven out of sanity by the terrors vividly portrayed by a bawling preacher who did not know what he was saying.

In the Roman Catholic Church they are not much wiser, although there the priests are well under control, and the people seek shelter from an outraged Creator, and an angry Redeemer, in the soft and pleading intercession of the Virgin ; but independently of there being no warrant for such teaching, they have one or two lively works, approved at Rome, in which various torments of hell-fire are pictured in vivid illustrations. All the misery, trouble, pain, torment, and anxiety that man can imagine and picture are in that little book. The author and artist seem to have worked together with a love for their labour. The acute invention of Dante and of Milton, and the devilish cunning of those who were the torturers of the Inquisition, or who invented the ingenious devices of punishment once in vogue in Venice, seem to have been anticipated in favour of the soul in hell.

And here it may not be out of place to remark upon

the devilish ingenuity of torment and torture. The Jews, a merciful people, it is said, knew not the cross till it was introduced by the Romans; but of its torture there can be no doubt. For many days, sometimes it is said for even three weeks, the crucified were dying; indeed the Jews, to accelerate death, broke their legs, especially if the victims were to be taken down so as not to be exposed on the Sabbath; but otherwise, naked, and in a burning sun, parched with a cruel fever thirst, which gall mixed with vinegar could not allay, the feet and hands pierced with nails, and the whole weight of the body pendent from the accursed tree, so that the muscles were torn and disrupted, the pectoral and abdominal bands broken, and every ache, and pain, and wound, that could be endured and yet leave life was endured, and the sufferer cried out in agony for death, and fainted for a time, and then swooned into sense and torture again, till nature could bear no more.

Such was the tender mercy of the Roman to his victim; otherwise he was sewn up in skins and worried by dogs, smeared with pitch and set fire to, to light a festal night, beaten with rods till flesh and muscle were one bruised pulp, hanged head downwards. In Christian times, those in Roman lands were just as cruel. To be torn to pieces by four horses pulling different ways was an easy death. Afterwards the Catholic mercies of the Holy Office for protecting the faith—thank God, not the faith of

Christ, but the dogmas of Rome—exhibited themselves in roasting the bottom of the victim's feet, placing his head in a helmet, which, as it closed, shot steel pins into the ears and eyes; wedging his crushed foot and leg in an iron boot; breaking him on the wheel, tearing his arms and legs out of joint on the rack, placing his head under a continual dropping of water till he went raving mad, tying a towel over the victim's open mouth, and letting water run gently into that mouth until the victim burst (this gentle 'question' was a favourite one for women), and many dozen of other ways of, as we said, devilish ingenuity, were the methods taken by misguided men to 'compel' their brothers to embrace that religion which forbids not only a hard blow, but even a harsh look or one ungentle thought.

Thank Heaven that the time of these persuasives, which never ought to have been at all, is now thoroughly passed. These tortures, which no one should forget or try to ignore, are cited for a purpose, for they show man's way of dealing with real or supposed error, and that way we hold to be different from God's; for certainly our thoughts are not His thoughts, nor are our ways His ways. It is therefore a fair analogy to suppose that many, if not all, of the torments dire, the red-hot eternal baths, the perpetual snow and ice, the stinking and putrid mud in which some are to be plunged headforemost, the glowing and molten copper cowls which others

wear, and the whole dreadful paraphernalia which man's lawless imagination and uncertain thoughts have invented, are after all mere awful chimeras, and can have no foundation in truth.

At any rate we are certain that they have little basis in the words of Him who spake as no man ever spake, and whose approach was heralded by a song of peace on earth and good-will towards men, and whose history, sayings, and doings are contained in four books, all of which bear an old English title—the Holy Gospels, or truly, in modern English, 'the Heavenly Glad Tidings.'

Wordsworth, after standing on Westminster Bridge, and seeing a vast city lying asleep before him, took to melancholy musings on the selfishness of man. He had with poetic fervour blessed the city in one sonnet. In another he wrote equally well on this prevailing selfishness. 'The world,' he said, 'was too much with us, late and soon; getting and spending we lay waste our powers.' And then he bursts out.

> Great God! I'd rather be
> A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
> So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
> Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn.

But would he be made less forlorn if he thought that the multitude of souls lying in the great city had such a future before them? Would he not have revolted as a modern poet of great power has revolted from the notion?

He, Mr. Swinburne, does not mince the matter; he would rather restore the old Pantheisms than this troublesome and weary worship which blackens and saddens life, and, to the large majority, promises only eternal pain. Thus, therefore, he cries to the old gods—

> What ailed us, O gods, to desert you
> For creeds that refuse and restrain?
> Come down and redeem us from virtue,
> Our Lady of Pain.

Here, at the two opposite poles of poetry, are men different from each other, rebelling at a feeling pressed upon them, as we believe by a misreading of the glad tidings of which we speak. Then comes the question, which should be an important one with many thinkers during the year—Is this, or is this not, a misreading? Do our preachers try to win us by love to our new-old creed, which in the present day seems to be undergoing a new expansion? Were the tidings glad, or dreadful? Was peace, with good-will, and all gentle feeling, preached, or not preached? Did He, the chief of this religion, attract or repel? Did He and His disciples 'deal damnation round the land' upon all who dissented from them, or did He not say, 'He who is not against Me is with Me?'

Did He not come to deliver us from the terror of the law, to bid us lay our burdens upon Him? and was He not compassionate and piteous, and did He not declare

that He would give us all inward peace? Did He not expressly exalt Hope to the second place of the three grand virtues, of which the chief is universal Love, or Charity? Were not Love and Hope to cast out fear? and, walking between two worlds as we are, on this narrow path of life, a birth from an unconscious life behind us, and the new birth (which is death) before us, can there be any braver or nobler spectacle than to see a man walking on joyfully and hopefully, not saddened by misfortune, or drunken and dazed by much business, enjoying life in a wise prudence, which insures health, doing his duty, helping his brothers, and trusting in the goodness of his Father to reward him at the last?

People may talk about Roman philosophy and Spartan heroism a good deal, but they certainly will not, in all the annals of haughty Rome or green-clad Greece, excel that spectacle; and it is a spectacle seen in every village, and known to every parson, nay, almost to every man. We meet with such constantly,—the brave, jolly, hopeful man, who accepts life as it is; who has nothing to tell but of God's goodness; who never complains, but rejoices; he, too, has received the 'glad tidings;' he knows as well as anyone how many are the chances and changes of life; but on he goes, without faltering. Such a man possesses a virtue that even Mr. Swinburne would not wish to be redeemed from.

It may be remarked that, as men grow wiser and older

they grow generally kinder. It is the firebrand but just lighted that spits and sputters so; whereas, when the brand glows with a perfect incandescence, it gives warmth without smoke or noise. So old and good ministers of all sects agree in preaching the glad tidings without any of the fear and terror, but with all the love. It was on July 13, 1834, that the wise and deep-thinking Coleridge, eminently learned in all theology, wrote a letter to his godchild, and said, 'with all the experience that more than threescore years can give'—and what years must this deeply-learned, most poetic of men, have lived—'I solemnly declare that, although health is a great blessing, competence won by honourable industry a blessing, and kind, faithful, loving friends, a great blessing,' yet the greatest was simply to have accepted the glad tidings, and to have been a Christian. Amidst all the troubles of life, 'sickness, poverty, ill-health,—in great weakness, on a sick-bed, without hope of recovery, and without a prospect of immediate removal,' this brave, good man, solemnly declared in the face of death that his Creator and Redeemer 'had supported him with an inward peace and joy, and an assurance of never withdrawing His spirit from him;' so that he felt, and said that all others also would feel, 'eminently blessed' if they began, as he did, early to love and trust their God.

The deaths of many religious men afford lessons of testing their lives, but none more so than that of this

great poet and theologian. His was not what is called a happy life, nor a lucky life; he was too great to be successful; he was conscious of an habitual sin or weakness which had the mastery over him; his family was not happy, although his children and friends revered him and loved him. He was so poor and unappreciated that, although the founder of not one, but many eminent schools of thought, and to be known more hereafter than now, he took refuge in a friend's house, and lived there till he died; his face beaming with sweet joy, a wonder and a comfort to all, his tongue eloquent with brave sayings of the goodness and greatness of God, his acute mind bent on unravelling some knotty point in theology or philosophy, he goes on till he is laid up by that thin fellow that conquers all the world, Master Death, and, when in his clutches, he sent a joyful, gallant, comfortable message to his godchild and his friends. If such a life is not brave, what is? And how was this poor invalid and pain-wracked hero upheld? Simply by the glad tidings which he knew were true.

And for ourselves, we are persuaded that too little is made of the true comfort and real glad tidings. We are always singing the *Miserere*, and never the *Gloria Patri*. We think much of the terrors, and little of the joys; we hesitate and stumble when we should go forward. But upon every trial let as many as think with us make up their minds to look joyfully, that is, with a joyful

wisdom and a wise joyfulness, at life. Man is not to be like a timid, trembling dog, which is of no use, but to be bold and brave, 'not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, rejoicing always,' knowing that after a life which rewards every healthy appetite with pleasure, every honest action with content, every free and unfettered motion with delight; after a world in which the birds, and fishes, and other animals, rejoice in their life, and the very trees and flowers tell of joy and content, we shall, if we do our honest duty, and no more, receive payment far above our merits from the Lord of the Vineyard, if we only humbly and faithfully accept His glad tidings, and do not trouble our heads about the melancholy prophets who, for their own amusement only, are continually bawling out misery, lamentation, and woe.

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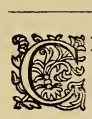

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